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THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

Revised Final Draft Screenplay

by

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THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

SONGS

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | "TWENTY FANS" | Narrator, Boys and Girls |
| 2. | "LITTLE PISSANT COUNTRY PLACE" | Dolly and The Girls |
| 3. | "SNEAKIN' AROUND" | Burt and Dolly |
| 4. | "GAMBLE EITHER WAY" | Dolly |
| 5. | "TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT" | Melvin and Dogettes |
| 6. | "FADED LOVE" | Burt and Dolly |
| 7. | "AGGIE SONG" | Boys and Girls |
| 8. | "ED EARL'S BALLAD" | Burt |
| 9. | "SIDESTEP" | Governor |
| 10. | "HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS" | Dolly and The Girls |
| 11. | "I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU" | Dolly and Burt |
| 12. | "TWENTY FANS" REPRISE | Narrator and The Company |

THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

NEW ACT BREAKDOWN

ACT ONE

1. Pre-credit sequence/"TWENTY FANS"/history of whorehouse.
2. Credits and "OVERTURE."
3. Introduce Ed Earl in town.
4. Introduce Mona/"LITTLE BITTY PISSANT COUNTRY PLACE."
5. Mona in town.
6. Ed Earl and Mona together/"SNEAKIN' AROUND."
7. Mayor gives Ed Earl the problem of Melvin. Ed Earl makes three phone calls and leaves for Houston.
8. Mona meets Shy and sings "GAMBLE EITHER WAY."
9. Ed Earl at TV station/meets Melvin/"TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT."

SONGS

"TWENTY FANS"
"LITTLE BITTY PISSANT COUNTRY
PLACE"
"SNEAKIN' AROUND"
"GAMBLE EITHER WAY"
"TEXAS HAS A WHOREHOUSE IN IT"

THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

NEW ACT BREAKDOWN

ACT TWO

1. Mona calms Ed Earl at the Chicken Ranch.
2. Ed Earl confronts Melvin in the town square and sends him running.
3. Texas Bar where they sing "FADED LOVE."
4. Lake scene.
5. Mona and Ed Earl see Ed Earl make a fool of himself on TV.
6. Confrontation with the Mayor and others in Ed Earl's office.
7. Mona promises Ed Earl she'll close the Chicken Ranch.
8. Football game.
9. "AGGIE SONG" from locker room to bus on road, ending at Chicken Ranch hoedown.
10. Ed Earl leaves Dulcie Mae's.
11. Deputy sees Melvin drive past the town square.
12. Mona at the Chicken Ranch, everything quiet.
13. Ed Earl at home when Deputy arrives.
14. Chicken Ranch raid.
15. Mona and Ed Earl have big argument in her room.

SONGS

"FADED LOVE"
"AGGIE SONG"

THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

NEW ACT BREAKDOWN

ACT THREE

1. Ed Earl stays up all night. Sings his "BALLAD."
2. "Walter Cronkite Evening News" does wrap-up on Chicken Ranch.
3. Mona in her room.
4. Town meeting at Dulcie's Cafe/Ed Earl leaves for Austin.
5. Governor sings "SIDESTEP" at the rotunda/meets with Ed Earl/Ed Earl socks Melvin.
6. The girls bored at the Chicken Ranch.
7. Mona in her room gets phone call from Ed Earl in his office.
8. Mona tells the girls the bad news.
9. The girls pack and sing "HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS."
10. The last scene at the Chicken Ranch/Ed Earl and Mona say good-bye with "I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU."
11. Drive away and reprise "TWENTY FANS."

SONGS

"ED EARL'S BALLAD"
"SIDESTEP"
"HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS"
"I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU"
"TWENTY FANS" REPRISE

THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS

1 OPENING TITLE CARDS

1

After the Universal logo, we open on a slow pan across a turn-of-the-century dressing table. We see old photographs showing a small group of whores with their madam, MISS WULLA JEAN, and the Sheriff of the small town of Gilbert, SHERIFF JACK ROY WALLACE. There are also mementos on the dressing table: a watch, reading glasses, a set of old military medals, a hand mirror and hair brush, mementos of Texas, an A & M football souvenir, old photos in an album, a china ballerina on a music box, etc. We play the "Production Company", the "Miller-Milkis-Boyett Presents" and the "Film By" credits over these things and then push in on an antique stereopticon with the double photo image of a small, newly built, two-story Victorian house situated on a wooded hill in the East Texas countryside. (X)

- 2 The two images optically move together to form one image. 2
They become live action and the NARRATOR begins as we push in on the house where a horse and wagon is pulling up to the porch.

NARRATOR

It was the nicest little whorehouse
you ever saw. It lay about a mile
outside the city limits.

3 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1910

3

Sheriff Jack Roy Wallace and Miss Wulla Jean pose with the girls on the front porch of the house as a photographer takes their picture with an old flash-powder camera.

NARRATOR

Sheriff Jack Roy Wallace picked it
our for Miss Wulla Jean and her
girls in 1910 when they moved there
from over the hardware store on
Main Street.

We pan down through the leaves of a tree to reveal two girls working in a little garden by the side of the house. It has the appearance of a turn-of-the-century ladies college as the other girls cut flowers, sit around the grape arbor and sun-dry their long hair.

(NOTE: We can bleed in the color slowly beginning with black and white, then sepia, then full color for the helicopter shot.) (X)

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

NARRATOR

3

(singing)
Oh, the little house lay in a
Green Texas glade
Where the trees were as coolin'
As fresh lemonade
Soft summer wind
Had a trace of perfume
And a fan was turnin'
In every room.

4 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1910

4
(X)

We see the old ceiling fans turning, followed by several shots through the fans of the girls making love under the sheets, squeaking mattress shots, bouncing bedsprings, with a chamber pot under the bed.

NARRATOR

(X)

Twenty fans were turnin'
They were turnin'
Twenty fans were turnin'
In every room
Fevers were a-burnin'
They were burnin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

5 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1914

5

Miss Wulla Jean stands at the front door welcoming customers entering the house. We see the keys of a pianola start playing ragtime as the girls and customers break into a turn-of-the-century-style dance.

NARRATOR

Miss Wulla Jean had a strict set of rules but she liked her ladies, as she called them, to treat her customers real good.

The dancing continues, as Miss Wulla Jean makes sure her girls are behaving in a ladylike way.

NARRATOR

She put a pianola in the parlor to sorta help break the ice. A feller could ask a girl to dance or if he held back a little, she'd ask him. And pretty soon they'd get a little business going -- two dollars worth.

The dance ends with a couple upstairs falling into bed.

6 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH GARDEN - DAY - 1917 6

We pan up from the garden to pick up a girl coming around the side of the house to welcome the World War I soldiers arriving at the front porch.

NARRATOR

(singing)

'It had nice watermelons
All covered with vines
And a vegetable garden
A few slender pines.'

7 INT. CHICKEN RANCH KITCHEN - DAY - 1917 7

Girls are taking cookies from the oven and sending the soldiers off with Red Cross parcels.

NARRATOR

(singing)

'White painted fence
With the roses in bloom.'

8 INT. AN UPSTAIRS ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1917 8

Shooting through the fan, we see a girl and a letter-sweatered college boy humping under the sheets.

NARRATOR

(singing)

'And a fan was turnin'
In every room.'

9 INT. AN UPSTAIRS ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1917 9

A girl is washing a DOUGHBOY'S privates in a hand basin. While the chorus sings the refrain, the Narrator continues:

NARRATOR

Miss Wulla Jean insisted that each girl check her customer real good for the clap and wash him off with soap and warm water. Some of the fellas claimed that was the best part.

DOUGHBOY

Ooooooweeeeeh!

The Doughboy takes off his hat and throws it o.s. right.

10
thru OMITTED
12

10
thru
12

13 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1930's

13

A jukebox is bouncing in the back of a pick-up truck.

13-A EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1930's

13-A

The pick-up truck with the jukebox drives up to the little house.

NARRATOR

During the thirties, she put in a jukebox to help take the depression out of the depression.

14 INT. A ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1930's

14

A GIRL shuts the window, closing out the blowing wind. She turns to a young farmer, who is carrying a gunny sack.

GIRL

Now, I'm sorry, honey. I gotta have my three dollars first. Miss Wulla Jean don't allow no honeyfuggin' 'til I pay my rent.

The farmer picks up the sack and reaches inside.

NARRATOR

It wasn't always easy to come up with three dollars, especially during the hard times.

The farmer pulls a chicken out of the bag and holds it up proudly for barter. The Girl sighs:

GIRL

Well, you just keep that in the bag and I'll take it out back soon as we're finished.

15 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - NIGHT - 1930's

15

We see some girls accepting payment from two farmers and a straw-hatted traveling salesman, all with chickens on their laps.

NARRATOR

And so the girls began accepting poultry in trade -- one bird, one lay....

- 16 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1930's 16
The girls are feeding the chickens and as we pull back we see they have built a temporary pen full of several hundred birds.
NARRATOR
And that's how the place got its name -- The Chicken Ranch!
- 17 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1940's 17
Establishing shot of the little house looking very festive at night.
NARRATOR
(singing)
'When the sun would go down....'
- 17-A EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1940's 17-A
World War II servicemen are being welcomed by the girls and the banners and flags patriotically hang over the front door.
NARRATOR
(singing)
'In a wild blaze of light
And the little house lay
In the stillness of night....'
- 18 INT. CHICKEN RANCH KITCHEN - DAY - 1940's 18
In a replay of the 1917 cookie-baking sequence, a girl takes a cookie sheet from the oven while the other girls hand out Red Cross parcels to the servicemen.
NARRATOR
By the end of World War Two, the Chicken Ranch had become one of the better-known businesses in all of Texas.
- 19 and 20 OMITTED 19 and 20
- 21 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1950's 21
A crew-cut college boy and his chosen girl race up the stairs. As they round the corner, she squeezes his buns.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED 21

NARRATOR

'Course if you grew up anywhere in
the state, you knew at an early age
they were selling something out
there other than poultry.

22 thru 24 OMITTED 22 thru 24

25 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1966 25

The helicopter shot. As we swoop across the fields of
grass, the first two title cards appear: "Burt Reynolds",
"Dolly Parton", then as we tilt up over the trees we fly
toward the Chicken Ranch -- "The Best Little Whorehouse
in Texas".

26 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY - 1966 26

A young black woman called JEWEL opens the door as a group
of college boys enter, pair up with girls and start doing
the Texas Twist through the house and out into the courtyard.

CHORUS

'Twenty fans were turnin'
They were turnin'
Twenty fans were turnin'
In every room
Fevers were a-burnin'
They were burnin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

27 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1966 27

The girls and the customers are doing the Texas Twist and
dancing off to their respective rooms around the courtyard.

CHORUS

'Twenty fans were hummin'
They were hummin'
Twenty fans were hummin'
In every room
Customers were comin'
They were comin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

27-A INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - NIGHT - 1966 27-A

Girls and their customers dance around the jukebox.

27-B INT. CHICKEN RANCH UPSTAIRS - NIGHT - 1966 27-B

Three couples dance and somersault into bed.

CHORUS

'Twenty fans were turnin'
They were turnin'
Twenty fans were turnin'
In every room
Fevers were a-burnin'
They were burnin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

Twenty fans were hummin'
They were hummin'
Twenty fans were hummin'
In every room
Customers were comin'
They were comin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.'

28 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - SUNRISE - 1966 28

The satisfied customers are leaving, getting into the
collegiate Volkswagons and executive Pontiacs.

JEWEL

Y'all come back now, hear?

The customers respond to Jewel's cry as if asked for an
encore, and so...they turn and run into the house, nearly
knocking Jewel over in the process.

28-A INT. AN UPSTAIRS ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1966 28-A

The customer whips a pair of panties from a girl's leg and
throws them into the air where they get stuck on a turning
fan.

CHORUS

'Twenty fans were turnin'
They were turnin'
Twenty fans were turnin'
In every room
Fevers were a-burnin'
They were burnin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

28-B INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - NIGHT - 1966

28-B

An older Sheriff Jack Roy supervises the arrest by his deputy of some low-life customers while an older Wulla Jean looks on with satisfaction from her wheelchair.

CHORUS

'Twenty fans were hummin'
They were hummin'
Twenty fans were hummin'
In every room.'

29 INT. A ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT - 1966

29

A couple are making it in bed while the fan turns above them and the mattress squeaks below.

CHORUS

'Customers were comin'
They were comin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.'

30 INT. A ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - DAWN - 1966

30

A cowboy, still wearing his hat in bed, is ecstatically coming to a climax.

31 EXT. A ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - DAWN - 1966

31

His shadow is silhouetted on the window shade and we hear his excited Voice.

VOICE

I'm comin'! I'm comin'! Thank
you. Thank you, Jesus.

We pan off the window up to the metal rooster weather vane on the roof and as the morning sun breaks across the horizon, the last title card flashes across the screen.

32 OMITTED

32

33 EXT. GILBERT COURTHOUSE - DAY - PRESENT 1976

33

We pan down from the sky, past the Texas flag and take a full shot of the Gilbert town square.

NARRATOR

In over three generations the
little house prospered while the
little town of Gilbert went about
its daily routine....

34 EXT. POINDEXTER'S USED CAR LOT - DAY 34

The mayor, RUFUS P. POINDEXTER, is showing a car to a potential customer while the customer's wife kicks the tires.

NARRATOR

Those folks that couldn't approve
of the Chicken Ranch....

35 INT. GILBERT GAZETTE OFFICES - DAY 35

EDSEL MACKEY is pulling the proof pages off the presses.

NARRATOR

...at least decided it fell under
the principle of peaceful
co-existence....

36 INT. DULCIE MAE'S CAFE - DAY 36

DULCIE MAE, a not unattractive widow in her early forties,
dusts off the framed election poster of Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd.

NARRATOR

And that was the policy followed by
Ed Earl Dodd, who was elected
sheriff when old Jack Roy retired
-- about ten years ago now.
Everybody likes Ed Earl.

A loud scream interrupts the Narrator. Dulcie Mae, pouring
coffee, looks off at someone shouting in the town square.
The cook and customers look off, too.

37 EXT. GILBERT COURTHOUSE - DAY 37

THREE NESTERS, playing dominoes in the gazebo, turn their
heads and see an hysterical MODENE ENNIS, sporting a tight
new permanent hairdo, running across the street and up the
steps of the courthouse.

MODENE

Dammit, Ed Earl!
That son-of-a-bitch.

38 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY 38

Modene is dashing down the corridor, screaming.

MODENE

Ed Earl! Ed Earl!

CONTINUED

38 CONTINUED

38

She walks through the swinging door past a startled RITA CROWELL, Ed Earl's gray-haired secretary.

MODENE

Morning, Rita.

DEPUTY FRED WILKINS is coming out of Ed Earl's office. He is swept back inside by the force of Modene's entrance.

MODENE

Morning, Deputy Fred.

She plants herself in front of the sheriff's desk, where ED EARL, leaning back in his chair, is whittling chains from a block of wood. Behind his desk hang portraits of all nine County Sheriffs ending with Jack Roy Wallace and Ed Earl Dodd.

MODENE

Dammit, Ed Earl, this is the final straw.

Ed Earl looks up and tips his hat back on his head.

ED EARL

Morning, Miss Modene.

MODENE

You told me last time that if that careless, shiftless Tucker Faylin ever let it happen again you'd take some action. Well, it's happened and this time I'm talking damages.

ED EARL

What's happened?

39 EXT. BEAUTY SHOP - DAY

39

A mule is standing in front of Miss Modene's car, with his behind sitting on the highly-polished hood. A few townspeople, including LOUISE MAPLES, a sweet, elderly lady, have gathered around to look at the bizarre sight.

Ed Earl, with his guns strapped on, looking like he's going out to meet Billy the Kid, walks across the street from the Courthouse. With him are Deputy Fred and Modene, pointing out her predicament.

CONTINUED

MODENE

I came out of the beauty shop and there he was, standing right in front of my car. So I went forward slowly, but he just buckled up his back legs and sat right down.

DEPUTY FRED

That's an ugly mule, Sheriff. Where's Tucker Faylin?

ED EARL

Shut up, Fred. I've handled this situation before.

He walks up to the mule and addresses him, man to man.

ED EARL

Mornin' mule. I'm Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd and I've got a request here for you to, pardon the expression, move your ass.

MANSEL, the barber, is giving C.J. VERNON, the insurance salesman, his morning shave. C.J. looks out the window.

C.J.

What's going on out there?

MANSEL

Ed Earl's talking to that jackass again.

C.J.

You mean the mule or Miss Modene?

They both laugh and settle back.

Ed Earl continues addressing the mule. He takes a cheroot from his breast pocket and puts it in his mouth.

ED EARL

I'm sorry you're taking it this way. I don't want to lose my temper because, as folks around here will tell you, that can be real trouble.

MODENE

Sheriff, you got to get him off there.

CONTINUED

41

CONTINUED

41

MODENE (Cont'd)

Look at the dent he's made in my hood.

DEPUTY FRED

Why don't you give him a tug?

ED EARL

Shut up, Fred. Now, listen, mule.
I don't want to get physical with
you. I want to be real polite. So,
I'm asking you for the last
time...Move!

The mule stares back at him and is singularly unimpressed.
Ed Earl gives up.

ED EARL

Okay, if that's your decision.

He strikes a match on his belt buckle and lights the cigar.
He then walks around the back of the mule. The mule looks
over his shoulder to see what's happening. A quick cut of
the mule's tail being lifted off the hood.

MODENE

What are you going to do, Sheriff.
Damn if that animal's ain't got the
best of you.

A sudden loud whinny and Modene falls back into the arms of
Deputy Fred.

42

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

42

Mansel and C.J. look out the window.

43

INT. GAZEBO - DAY

43

The three nesters look up from their game.

44

EXT. GILBERT TOWN SQUARE - DAY

44

A long shot of the mule as it gallops wildly across the town
square.

45

INT. DULCIE MAE'S CAFE - DAY

45

Dulcie Mae glances up a Ed Earl enters.

DULCIE MAE

Morning, Ed Earl.

CONTINUED

45

CONTINUED

ED EARL

45

Morning, Dulcie.
She begins to pour him a cup of coffee as he sits down at the counter.

DULCIE MAE

I brought you in a piece of that
home-baked pie you liked at supper
last night.

ED EARL

Why, thank you.

DULCIE MAE

Goodness, that was some fuss out
there. How did you get that animal
to move?

ED EARL

Well, Dulcie Mae, the way to handle
an animal is like my daddy used to
tell me. He used to say....

Edsel flings open the cafe door and steps inside.

EDSEL

Dear lord on the dashboard. I can't
believe my eyes!

DULCIE MAE

What's the matter Edsel?

EDSEL

I just saw a mule run down that
alley with cigar smoke blowing out
of his ass.

Dulcie Mae looks at Ed Earl. He picks up his coffee.

ED EARL

That's what my daddy told me.

Dulcie Mae laughs.

46

EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT

46

The sun goes down over a long shot of the Chicken Ranch.

NARRATOR

Just about the time Ed Earl took
over as sheriff, Miss Wulla Jean
passed away.

47 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - NIGHT

47

Jewel, now more mature, is greeting customers at the front door and taking their money. Miss Wulla Jean's portrait hangs on the wall and couples are still dancing to the old jukebox in the front parlor.

NARRATOR

She bequeathed her place to her favorite working girl, Mona Stangle, who, you might say, had worked her way up from the bottom....

48 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

48

The door opens and, from a low angle, we see a glamorous pair of legs walk along the corridor.

NARRATOR

No one knew much about her, where she came from or why, but they did know she ran the same tight ship and carried on the same tradition of quality.

49

INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

49

We follow the woman until she turns at the top landing. Customers at the front door turn their heads and look up. MONA STANGLEY, glamorously gowned, smiles a welcome and begins walking down the stairs.

MONA

(singing)

It's just a little old
Bitty pissant country place
Ain't nothin' much to see
No drinking allowed
We get a nice quiet crowd
Plain as it can be.

It's just a piddly squattin' ole
Time country place
Ain't nothin' too high-toned
Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill
But there's nothing dirty goin' on!

GIRLS AND BOYS

Nothin' dirty goin' on.

Miss Mona walks into the parlor.

MONA

We get simple farmers
Local businessmen
Congress folks from Austin
Young boys lookin' for sin
Now we used to get a lot of roughnecks
When the oil boom was high
But payday'd get a little rowdy
Thank God the field run dry.

MONA AND THE GIRLS

It's just a little bitty pissant
Country place
Nothin' much to see
No drinkin' allowed
We get a nice quiet crowd
Plain as it can be.

It's just a piddly squattin'
Old time country place
Nothin' too high-toned
Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill
But there's nothin' dirty goin' on!

CONTINUED

49

CONTINUED

49

MONA

I don't hire no married girls
They're not on the ball
'Cause they got homes and husbands
They're not stable at all
'Cause they don't understand a thing
About a proper business day
Now what's the point of
Openin' up the store
If you give the goods away?

It's just a little bitty pissant
Country place
Nothin' much to see
No drinkin' allowed
We get a nice quiet crowd
Plain as it can be.

A girl in the back nudges a guy to keep his hip flask hidden
in his jacket.

MONA AND JEWEL

It's just a piddly squattin'
Old time country place
Nothin' too high-toned
Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill
But there's nothin' dirty goin' on!

50

INT. CHICKEN RANCH DINING ROOM - DAY

50

All the girls, in their nighties and bathrobes, are down for
breakfast, seated at the big table. The Cook has a helper,
but Jewel is in charge of serving.

MONA

Keep your language clean, girls
Keep your bedrooms neat
Don't hang around the town cafe
Or say 'hi' on the street.

Mind your P's and Q's
And manners
And you don't need no other tools
'Cause every girl who lives here knows
My special no-no rules.

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED

50

JEWEL

Yeah, every girl who lives here knows
Miss Mona's no-no rules.

MONA

Ruby Rae, start 'em.

RUBY RAE

Beds are not to be wallowed in
That's the kind of thing
That big fat lazy hogs do.

MONA

And it don't make money. Beatrice....

BEATRICE

And I won't tolerate no tyin'
Up my telephone with other
People's business.

MONA

Eloise, honey....

ELOISE

And please don't show us
No tattoos, no hearts and flowers
On your thigh.

MONA

It's downright tacky.

GINGER, DURLA AND ANGEL

Brands belong on cattle
And that ain't what we're
Sellin' at Miss Mona's.

MONA

Do you catch my drift?
I pay the food and the rent
And the utilities
You keep your mind on your work
Responsibilities
Don't let your mouth overload your
Capabilities
And we can get along...Dawn....

DAWN

Any bad habits you come in with
Get rid of right now.

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED - 2

50

Taddy Jo....

MONA

TADDY JO
I can't stand no chewin' gum
It looks just like a cow.

MONA

Linda Lou....

LINDA LOU
Anyone takin' sick leave
Oughta be real sure they're sick.

MONA

And every time you hear that bell....

Jewel rings the bell prominently displayed in the hall at
the bottom of the stairs.

MONA AND GIRLS

Better get here double quick!

51 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH GARDEN - DAY

51

It's the afternoon free time and while the girls lounge
around outside in their day wear, Miss Mona continues
singing.

MONA

And as for pimps, pimps are somethin'
You don't need to get your daily
Business done
Are you listenin' good?
So keep those leeches and bloodsuckers
Off the back road
I know how to use a gun
No one messes with my girls.

One girl practices the flute, another ballet, another yoga,
while another girl is sitting on the wooden swing reading a
book "How To Make Money In Real Estate".

MONA

And any questions you might have
About the way I run this place
Don't gripe and whine
Behind my back
Just tell me face-to-face
I'm open-minded
Say it all.
Then go upstairs and pack
The door's thata way.

52 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

52

The girls start coming out of their rooms and begin dancing downstairs.

GIRLS

She pays the food and the rent and the
Utilities
We keep our mind on our work
Responsibilities
Don't let your mouth overload your
Capabilities.

53 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - TV PARLOR - NIGHT

53

Mona pushes the sliding doors aside and steps out to greet a group of conventioners.

MONA

And we can get along.
(talking)
Howdy, boys. Welcome to the
Chicken Ranch.

MEN

Hello...
Howdy, Miss Mona...
Nice to see you....

MONA

Come on over here, I'd like
you to meet my girls.

54 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

54

The music changes as the girls vamp down the stairs in a slow line, draped across the banister.

GIRLS

It's just a little bitty pissant
Country place
Nothin' much to see
No drinkin' allowed
We get a nice quiet crowd
Plain as it can be.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED

54

GIRLS (Cont'd)

It's just a piddly squattin' old time
Country place
Nothin' too high-toned
Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill
But there's nothin' dirty goin' on.

Suddenly the place is full of customers who pair off with
the girls and begin dancing.

MONA, GIRLS, AND BOYS

It's just a little bitty pissant
Country place
Nothin' much to see
No drinkin' allowed
We get a nice quiet crowd
Plain as it can be.

It's just a piddly squattin' old time
Country place
Nothin' too high-toned.

The girls begin taking their customers up the stairs . . .
tempo doubles.

MONA AND GIRLS

Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill.

JEWEL AND BOYS

Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill.

MONA, GIRLS AND BOYS

Jes' lots of good will
And maybe one small thrill.

MONA

But there's nothin' dirty goin' on.

55 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

55

The girls come running up the stairs and take their guests
inside their rooms.

GIRLS AND BOYS

Nothin' dirty goin' on!

All doors slam.

56 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - SUNRISE

56

A rooster standing on a fence post crows to greet the rising sun. Last night's guests come straggling out, feeling spent but happy. The girls yawn and stretch and wave good-bye from the porch or the upstairs windows. Everybody looks very contented.

NARRATOR

And so the Chicken Ranch continued to live in peace with the town and the folks there took secret pride in the oldest established, permanently operating, non-floating whorehouse in Texas...that is, until about a year ago last Thanksgiving.

56-A INT. INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

56-A

C.J. is on the phone.

(X)

C.J.

(X)

Holy shit!

(X)

57 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

57

In a cloud of dust, Ed Earl speeds his sheriff's car down a country road.

58 INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY

58

Ed Earl looks very agitated as if he were chasing a criminal. He glances at his watch and steps on the gas.

59 INT. SHERIFF'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

59

Rita, seated at her desk, has finished writing out a receipt.

RITA

I can't tell you how thrilled we are with this contribution, Miss Mona. Here's your receipt.

She hands the receipt to Mona, who is standing at the counter in front of her.

MONA

Thank you, Rita.

RITA

Those kids will be so excited. And the Mayor, too. Why, the town council will probably vote you another plaque.

CONTINUED

59

CONTINUED

59

MONA

I hope not, Rita. I've got a closet full of them now.

Dulcie Mae steps in from the corridor and stops when she sees Mona.

RITA

Hello, Dulcie Mae. You know Miss Mona.

DULCIE MAE

Yes, of course. We've met. Mornin'.

MONA

How are you?

RITA

Isn't this wonderful. Miss Mona has capped the goal for the Little League Fund Campaign.

DULCIE MAE

How nice. On behalf of my son and his teammates, I'd like to thank you.

MONA

Tell them I'll be well repaid when they take the championship this year. Good-bye, Rita.

Mona starts for the door.

RITA

I'm sorry the Sheriff wasn't here to thank you. He drove over to Meritsville. He'll be gone all afternoon.

MONA

Well, tell him I said hi.
(to Dulcie)
'Bye.

DULCIE MAE

'Bye.

RITA

'Bye.

Mona leaves.

60 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

60

Ed Earl continues racing across the countryside.

61 EXT. GILBERT TOWN SQUARE - DAY

61

Mona is getting into her car as Deputy Fred drives up.

DEPUTY FRED

Hello, Miss Mona. Nice to see you.

MONA

Hello, Deputy Fred. You keeping an eye on my place at night?

DEPUTY FRED

Sure are. The Sheriff's real particular about the security out there.

MONA

Well, some night when you're not on duty you drop on by. I'm sure the girls would like to show their appreciation.

DEPUTY FRED

Oh, Miss Mona, shucks. You know I'm a married man.

MONA

Now, Fred, you think the cows don't appreciate the time off when the bull goes on over to the next pasture?

DEPUTY FRED

(blushing)

Oh, Miss Mona.

Mona laughs and drives out of town.

62 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

62

A closeup of Ed Earl as he continues driving.

63 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

63

His Sheriff's car speeds past camera.

64 EXT. ED EARL'S HOUSE - DAY 64

Ed Earl turns his car off the highway and drives up to the front porch of a house. He gets out.

65 INT. ED EARL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 65

Ed Earl strides across the living room to the bedroom, sees a jacket flung over a chair, fingers it for a moment, smiles to himself, then flings open the bedroom door.

66 INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - DAY 66

Ed Earl stops in the doorway and his face falls at what he sees.

ED EARL

Dammit!

We cut and see a figure lying in bed in the darkened room. The lights turn on. Mona is lying in his bed with a sheet pulled up coyly to her chin. She smiles at him.

MONA

What's the matter?

ED EARL

You've gotten into bed already.

MONA

So?

ED EARL

I've told you a hundred times, watching you undress is the best part.

MONA

The best part?

ED EARL

Well, maybe not the best part, but certainly in the top two.

MONA

Well then, Ed Earl....

She throws off the sheet and we see that she's lying in bed fully clothed. Ed Earl laughs.

CONTINUED

66

CONTINUED

66

ED EARL

I'm glad I was late.

MONA

Me too.

He starts toward the bed, but she bounces out and picks up a package from her tote bag.

MONA

Now, just hold it for a second.
I've got a surprise for you. I
picked up a package this morning
from the post office. It's the
latest thing from Frederick's of
Hollywood.

She holds up a black shorty negligee. He isn't very impressed.

ED EARL

Not much to it.

MONA

I think I can fill it out.

She goes into the bathroom. He laughs and shouts after her.

ED EARL

I'll bet you can.

He quickly undoes his tie and takes off his shirt.

ED EARL

I swear to God, Mona, there ain't a
woman in the world that can get me
as excited as you can.

MONA (v.o.)

Even after all these years we been
meeting like this?

ED EARL

Every year with you, darlin', is
like a minute of sheer happiness.

MONA (v.o.)

That's very sweet, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Well, you bring out the romantic
in me.

CONTINUED

He undoes his belt and drops his pants. He looks up as Mona appears in the doorway. She looks stunning in her black negligee.

ED EARL

Woweeeee! That was quick.

MONA

I've had a lot of practice getting in and out of my clothes. What do you think?

She models it for him.

ED EARL

Hot damn, Mona, it makes me feel real sexy.

MONA

You don't look very sexy.

ED EARL

(taken aback)

What do you mean? I look like I always look.

MONA

That's the problem. It's those damn boxer shorts. I can't stand the look of those droopy white drawers.

ED EARL

These? What's the matter with them? I always wear boxer shorts. I've worn them for years.

MONA

They look it.

ED EARL

This is a brand new pair. And what do you mean I don't look sexy? People have always said I look sexy. They say I have a sexy quality.

MONA

You do, but those boxer shorts don't. Now, look here. This is what I ordered expressly for you.

CONTINUED

She takes a pair of black jockey shorts from her tote bag. He shuffles over to her with his pants still around his boots and takes a look at them.

ED EARL

Looks like a Japanese sling shot.

MONA

It's a pair of jockey shorts with little silver snaps on the side.

ED EARL

I'm not getting into those. They'd kill me.

MONA

They cost me twenty dollars, plus postage, Ed Earl, and I want you to wear them.

ED EARL

Twenty dollars for that little thing? You got screwed.

MONA

Come on, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

I'm not putting them on.

MONA

If they look half as good as I think they will, you won't have to keep them on for long.

ED EARL

Mona, I'm not going to wear that thing. They're ridiculous. They're embarrassing.

MONA

They're sexy.

ED EARL

I said 'no' and that's the end of it.

MONA

Okay, then I'm getting dressed.

ED EARL

Okay, I'll put them on.

CONTINUED

66

CONTINUED - 4

66

He grabs them and, still shuffling, makes his way into the bathroom.

ED EARL

(muttering)

Damn. They'll be like putting two
bowling balls in a marble sack.

Mona laughs and takes the phone off the hook. She goes to a closet and brings out a pillow.

MONA

I saw Dulcie Mae in town today.

Ed Earl talks from the bathroom.

ED EARL (v.o.)

Oh, yeah?

MONA

I expect you're going out to her
place for Thanksgiving dinner?

ED EARL (v.o.)

Don't I always?

MONA

Well, you better start checking
that turkey, 'cause there's a hook
inside that's gonna land you right
over at the wedding chapel.

ED EARL (v.o.)

Not me, Mona. I don't believe in
that stuff. It don't work out.

MONA

Amen to that.

Ed Earl sticks his head out around the door.

ED EARL

Ready?

MONA

I'm always ready.

CONTINUED

Like a flash, Ed Earl runs out of the bathroom across the room, jumps into bed and pulls the sheet up to his chin. Mona laughs.

MONA

Oh, Ed Earl. Is that it?

ED EARL

Yeah. How was it?

MONA

But I hardly saw them.

ED EARL

That's too bad, because I ain't going to parade around this room like some damn model.

MONA

Come on, Ed Earl. Do it for me.

ED EARL

No.

MONA

I just want to take a look at them.

ED EARL

No.

Mona lifts up the bottom of the sheet.

MONA

Come on, just a little peek.

ED EARL

No.

She puts her hand under the sheet. Ed Earl jumps up.

ED EARL

Mona!

Mona withdraws her hand and holds up the shorts in triumph.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED - 6

66

MONA

That's what the little silver snaps
are for.

ED EARL

(laughing)

Come on over here and let me put a
lip-lock on you. Ooops! Wait!
I've gotta brush my teeth.

He grabs the bedspread, wraps it around himself and hobbles
into the bathroom. Mona laughs.

MONA

Oh, Ed Earl, I like a lot of
things, but these afternoons with
you have got to top the list.

ED EARL

Sing it to me, honey.

MONA

(singing)

I like fancy frilly things
High-heeled shoes and diamond rings
Ragtime bands and western swing
And sneakin' around with you.

ED EARL

(singing)

I like beer and rodeos
Detective books and dominoes
Football games and Cheerios
And sneakin' around with you.

TOGETHER

Sneakin' around with you
Goin' a round or two
Doin' what lovers do
Whenever we're sneaking around.

MONA

I like lots of cash on hand
And dirty jokes about the Fuller Brush Man.

ED EARL

I like stuff I understand
Like sneakin' around with you.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED - 7

66

MONA

I like a thrill that has no strings.

ED EARL

Friendship that don't ever change.

MONA

And laughter from the joy of things.

TOGETHER

And sneakin' around with you
We're just sneakin' around
we're not chained and bound
Sharin' the ups and downs
Of lovers sneakin' around.

MONA

Oh, I like drive-in picture shows
Kissin' long and lovin' slow.

ED EARL

The secret places lovers go
Whenever they're sneakin' around
I like the crazy things we try.

MONA

And the sexy things we fantasize.

ED EARL

And makin' out in broad daylight.

TOGETHER

Sneakin' around with you
Sneakin' around with you
Keepin' it all brand new
Gettin' the best of you
Whenever we're sneakin' around.

ED EARL

Sneakin' around that's all.

MONA

I'm gonna lay down the law.

TOGETHER

Watchin' the rise and fall
Of lovers sneakin' around.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED - 8

66

ED EARL
We're just sneakin' around.

TOGETHER
We're just sneakin'....

The song ends with them sitting on the edge of the bed just about to kiss. But this kiss is interrupted by a sudden loud knocking.

67 EXT. ED EARL'S HOUSE - DAY

67

Deputy Fred is knocking at the front door.

DEPUTY FRED
Sheriff. Sheriff.

68 INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - DAY

68

Ed Earl and Mona haven't moved. They listen.

ED EARL
It's Deputy Fred. What the hell
does he want?

MONA
I don't know. I think you better
go find out.

ED EARL
Okay. Hold that position. I'll be
right back.

He leaves her sitting on the bed.

69 EXT. ED EARL'S HOUSE - DAY

69

Deputy Fred is continuing to knock on the door.

DEPUTY FRED
Sheriff! It's me, Deputy Fred.

The door opens and Ed Earl stands in the doorway, wearing nothing but the bedspread.

ED EARL
This better be important.

CONTINUED

69

CONTINUED

69

DEPUTY FRED

Well, I think it is. I saw your car from the highway and I figured your phone must be out because what are you wearing that for?

ED EARL

I'm taking a shower.

DEPUTY FRED

Oh. I always take mine in the morning. I read in the Reader's Digest about....

ED EARL

I don't care. What the hell do you want?

DEPUTY FRED

It's the Mayor. He's real anxious to speak to you. Rita's been calling all over the county for you. He wants a meeting right away.

ED EARL

Can't it wait?

DEPUTY FRED

You mean until after you take a shower?

ED EARL

Go radio them that I'll be back when I get there. Nothing's that important it can't wait until this afternoon.

70

INT. ED EARL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

70

Ed Earl shuts the door and walks back into the bedroom.

71

INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - DAY

71

Ed Earl enters, looks around and sees Mona's negligee folded neatly by the side of the bed. He picks it up for a minute, then hears a car start off outside. He throws down the negligee and starts for the front door.

72

INT. ED EARL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

72

Ed Earl crosses the living room and opens the front door.

73 EXT. ED EARL'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

73

Ed Earl steps out on the porch and looks. In the driveway, Deputy Fred is talking to Mona. She drives off and he waves good-bye. Chuckling to himself, Deputy Fred walks over to the porch.

DEPUTY FRED

Ain't that funny. All this time, Miss Mona was at the back, knocking on the screen door. She said she's in a hurry but just dropped by to give you this.

He hands Ed Earl the pair of black jockey shorts with the little silver snaps. Ed Earl takes it and holds it up, shaking his head. Deputy Fred explains.

DEPUTY FRED

It's a Japanese slingshot.

Ed Earl shoots him a look, then turns and goes back inside.

74 INT. SHERIFF'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

74

The Mayor and C.J. have been anxiously waiting for the Sheriff. Ed Earl enters, followed by Deputy Fred, and hands his way over to his desk.

ED EARL

Okay, Rufus, what's on your mind?

MAYOR

Something that could have serious implications to the health of this town. Tell 'im, C.J., just like you told me.

C.J.

Well, Sheriff, I have a friend who works at a TV station in Houston and he's tipped me off that Melvin P. Thorpe is planning to do an expose on the Chicken Ranch.

ED EARL

Who?

MAYOR

Melvin P. Thorpe. He's that crazy consumer advocate. Has that report on the late night news.

DEPUTY FRED

He's got a new show now. Half hour. Once a week. The Watchdog Report. It's on tonight.

CONTINUED

74

CONTINUED

74

ED EARL

Well, I don't think he can say anything about the Chicken Ranch on TV. It's supposed to be a family medium.

MAYOR

But he's a sensationalist, Ed Earl. He shows up with his TV camera anytime a consumer has a complaint. He's a menace to the business community.

DEPUTY FRED

He's the fella who put the peanuts back in the chocolate bar.

ED EARL

What?

DEPUTY FRED

He made the makers of the Peanut Delight candy bar admit they put less peanuts in each bar than they advertise and got them to change their ways.

ED EARL

Sounds like a pretty tough customer.

DEPUTY FRED

He has a lot of influence out there.

MAYOR

And if he starts bringing his cameras out to the Chicken Ranch....

ED EARL

Calm down, Rufus. Let me make a few phone calls. I've got a little influence out there myself.

75

INT. TV STATION - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

75

The MANAGER of KPTZ, Channel 4, is talking to Ed Earl on the phone.

TV STATION MANAGER

It's no use talking to me, Sheriff. Melvin P. Thorpe is now the biggest attraction at this station. High ratings, lots of letters. He doesn't listen to anybody. Hell, he wants to go national. He wants to be watchdog for the whole U.S. of A.

76 INT. SHERIFF CHAPMAN'S OFFICE - HOUSTON - DAY

76

SHERIFF CHAPMAN of Houston, a friend of Ed Earl's, is talking to him on the phone.

SHERIFF CHAPMAN

I'd like to help you, Ed Earl, but just like you don't want to mess with the Chicken Ranch, I don't want to ruffle the feathers of this bird. He's getting to be a regular Texas attraction.

77 INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - AUSTIN - DAY

77

SENATOR CHARLES WINGWOOD, an undistinguished blowhard legislator, is on the phone with Ed Earl.

SENATOR

Now wait a minute, Ed Earl. I'd tread easy on this one. Those TV boys can be mighty powerful -- and mighty useful, if you get my meaning.

The SENATOR'S AIDE interrupts.

AIDE

Senator, a roll call.

SENATOR

Sorry, I've got to go. Damn food stamps again. But let me give you a word of advice from one elected official to another -- be careful of the box.

78 INT. SHERIFF'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

78

Ed Earl hangs up in disgust.

ED EARL

What the hell's going on? This Melvin P. Thorpe character has everybody bamboozled.

MAYOR

This is serious, Ed Earl. You've got to do something.

CONTINUED

ED EARL

Deputy Fred, you hold down the fort.

DEPUTY FRED

Where you goin'?

ED EARL

I'm driving up to Houston to take
care of that little peckerwood myself.

Ed Earl grabs his hat and stalks out.

79 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

79

Mona drives up to the Chicken Ranch and parks her car around back.

80 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

80

Mona comes in the back door and walks through the kitchen. Jewel stops her at the bottom of the stairs.

JEWEL

Hi, Miss Mona.

MONA

Hello, Jewel. How'd everything go this afternoon?

JEWEL

It's been quiet. A couple Army boys from Fort Hood. And right now the Coca-Cola man is making a delivery upstairs. Oh, and there's a girl wants to see you in the parlor.

MONA

We ain't hiring.

JEWEL

That's what I told her, but she is persistent. I think you should see her.

MONA

Okay.

81 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - DAY

81

Mona walks into the parlor. A young straggly haired country girl with a cardboard suitcase stands up as she enters and gives Mona a very pretty, somewhat nervous smile. We get to know her later as SHY.

SHY

Hello. Miss Mona?

MONA

That's right.

SHY

My name's Anna Merle Seltzer.

CONTINUED

81

CONTINUED

81

MONA

Well, sit down, Anna Merle.

They sit.

SHY

I want a job here.

MONA

I'm kinda choosy about who lives
in my house. Who told you about it?

SHY

Well, I met a girl in Galveston....

MONA

Ever have a run-in with the law?

SHY

No, ma'am. And I don't want to.
That's why I'd like to work in a
respectable place.

MONA

How much experience have you had?

SHY

You mean professional?

MONA

For money, honey.

SHY

About a year.

MONA

On the streets?

SHY

No, ma'am.

MONA

For a pimp?

SHY

No, ma'am.

MONA

Motel, hotel, telephone, van?

CONTINUED

SHY
I, uh...I....

Shy trails off. She is obviously lying. Mona drops the businesswoman manner and speaks softly.

MONA
What are you doin' here, honey?

Shy is near tears. She shakes her head.

MONA
I think maybe you better just head
on back home.

SHY
I'm broke.

MONA
Well, I could lend you fifty
dollars. Course you'd have to pay
me back someday.

SHY
It ain't that, ma'am. I got
nowheres to go home to.

MONA
Boyfriend treat you bad?

SHY
No, ma'am.

MONA
Folks run you off?

SHY
No, but I ain't never goin' back
there.

She glares straight at Mona and we see a toughness for the first time.

MONA
Did your daddy get sweet on you,
honey?

Shy lowers her eyes. She can't answer, but we know it's true.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED - 3

81

MONA

Well, that ain't the first time it's happened to a girl, it ain't gonna be the last. Maybe I can get you a job downtown at the five and dime.

SHY

No. I don't want no sales job! I done thought about this. I'm gonna stay right here...I mean, if you'll let me.

MONA

Ordinarily I put girls like you on the next Greyhound, but a smile don't cost nothin' and you came in with one. Ain't nothin' worse for business than girls sittin' around the parlor with long faces.

SHY

Can I stay, then?

MONA

Well, I'm gonna try you out for a while.

(shouting out)

Jewel...come on in here.

(to Shy)

We've got to get you some new clothes and do something about that hair. I'll have one of the girls take you to a beauty shop tomorrow. There are three in town and I like to rotate my business among them. They appreciate that and treat us real nice....

Shy suddenly embraces Mona and sobs uncontrollably. Mona is at first surprised, then holds her and tries to comfort her.

MONA

Come on, now, honey. You're gonna mess up my outfit.

But Shy is like a puppy that's been saved from the pound. She keeps crying and Mona finds herself being very moved.

MONA

Oh, Lord, girl. You got me on the edge of crying. And I've done retired from it. Come on, now. Get a hold on. You'll be fine.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED - 4

81

Jewel enters and stands in the doorway. Shy stops crying and Mona wipes away Shy's tears.

SHY

I'm sorry, Miss Mona.

MONA

That's all right, honey. I know how you feel.

(singing)

Bein' born was the worst and the first
Mistake I ever made
The doctor didn't spank me
He just slapped me in the face
And the cup of love was always quenchin'
Someone else's thirst
Leaving me to swallow
The bitter taste of hurt.

'Cause I was raised an orphan
Never wanted as a kid
Until the year I turned thirteen
Then everybody did
Strangers passed me back and forth
Men just took me as they pleased
And others had a Cinderella slave
To cook and clean and weave.

Though the deck is stacked against you
Win or lose you have to play
The hand that life has dealt you
And it's a gamble either way.

On a dusty road at fifteen
In a yellow cotton dress
With the desert sun like an angry dragon
Breathin' down my neck
And the dry cracked plains that made me think
Of a prehistoric time
Should I fear what lay before me
Less than what I'd left behind.

A fifteen year old girl don't have
No trouble hitchin' rides
But sometimes when you're ridin' free
You'll pay the highest price
On back roads, and in backseats
And in cheap highway motels
But what's a few more strangers
In a life of nothin' else.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED - 5

81

MONA (Cont'd)

(singing)

Though the deck is stacked against you
Win or lose you have to play
The hand that life has dealt you
And it's a gamble either way.

Sixteen found me cryin'
Underneath a scarlet light
On the doorstep of a stranger
On a cold and rainy night
When I walked into the parlor here
The pieces seemed to fit
I was good at pleasin' strangers
So I made the most of it.

Either way it's all a gamble
So view the stakes and know the odds
Lay your cards upon the table
Do your dealin' from the top.

Though the deck is stacked against you
Win or lose you have to play
The hand that life has dealt you
And it's a gamble either way

(spoken)

Yeah, it's a gamble either way.

Jewel, who has been listening through the song, glances over at Mona. A look of recognition passes between them. Shy looks up at Jewel.

SHY

Miss Mona's gonna let me stay.

JEWEL

That's wonderful, child, but after
talking to you this afternoon it
don't surprise me none.

Mona smiles at Jewel and walks out to the hallway to beckon to the girls passing by.

MONA

Girls, come on in here.

Ginger and Ruby Rae enter. Mona introduces them to Shy.

MONA

Girls, this is Anna Merle Seltzer.
Goodness, that's a mouthful. We've
got to do something about that.
Even at our reduced rates, that
name's a tough sell.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED - 6

81

SHY

Well, I was thinking of changing it to Dawn.

MONA

Hmmmm. I already got me a Dawn. I'm just gonna call you Shy 'til I can think of something better. This is Ginger and Ruby Rae.

GINGER

Howdy.

RUBY RAE

Hello, honey.

MONA

Take Shy upstairs and show her around. She'll be boarding with us for a while.

SHY

Thanks, Miss Mona.

GINGER

Well, that's good news. We can sure use the help with all them college boys coming over here Thanksgiving night.

SHY

College boys?

MONA

Yeah. The winning seniors from the Texas Aggie/Texas University football game get treated to a night here on Thanksgiving.

JEWEL

By their Alumni Association.

RUBY RAE

It's a tradition. Been going on for years.

MONA

You see, honey, the Chicken Ranch is a Texas institution and I aim to keep it that way.

82 EXT. HOUSTON - DUSK

82

We pan down from a helicopter shot of the Houston skyline and zero into the building that houses Channel 4.

83 INT. TV STATION - NIGHT

83

Ed Earl is following a Page down the aisle of the TV studio backstage. The Page shows him Melvin's dressing room and exits. Ed Earl knocks on the door.

MELVIN (v.o)

Come in.

Ed Earl enters.

84 INT. MELVIN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

84

MELVIN P. THORPE is sitting in his white T-shirt and American flag boxer shorts while he puts the finishing touches to the straightening of his Buster Brown wig. Ed Earl is a little surprised.

(X)

ED EARL

Mister Thorpe?

Melvin looks up in the mirror, sees him and jumps up with a smile.

MELVIN

I know you.

ED EARL

You do?

MELVIN

Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd. Come on in. They told me you were here.

(X)

ED EARL

I hope I'm not....

(X)

MELVIN

No. No. This is my pleasure...

(X)

(shaking hands
enthusiastically)

My honor. What brings you up here to Houston? Please, sit down.

(waves to
the couch)

Anywhere over there. I'm just getting dressed. I've got the show tonight and I'm running a bit behind time.

Ed Earl sits on the couch and Melvin returns to dressing.

CONTINUED

84

CONTINUED

84

During the following dialogue, Ed Earl watches him put on his corset, jock pad, shoulder pads, red, white and blue suit and tie and white cowboy boots.

(X)

ED EARL

Well, it's the show I want to talk to you about, Mister Thorpe.

MELVIN

Melvin.

ED EARL

Melvin....

MELVIN

You watch the show, Ed?

ED EARL

Well, I....

MELVIN

Last week was the best rating we ever had. The City Planning Commissioner driving a city car while he was on vacation! We broke a thirty share. And it's affecting my pieces on the late night news. Up! Up! Up! They love my little report.

ED EARL

I've heard you're very popular.

MELVIN

The power of television -- of public exposure -- is so great it scares me. I swear I could get the Mayor's own children to throw rocks at him. Which show did you like best?

ED EARL

(after a beat)

Well, I...I thought the peanuts in the chocolate bar....

MELVIN

One of my favorites! Three score means sixty, like the Bible says. So, if it says sixty nuts on the

CONTINUED

84 CONTINUED - 2

84

MELVIN (Cont'd)
wrapper, I want to count sixty nuts
inside. Right?..And I'm talking
whole nuts, not half nuts or nut
bits or nut chips. We're talking a
full nut!

ED EARL

I can see that.

MELVIN

Thank God we still live in a
society where anything that's phony
or dishonest can't stand the light
of day.

He puts on his shirt over his padded shoulders and gets one
pad caught. Ed Earl points it out.

ED EARL

Your pad there....

MELVIN

Oh, thanks...Yes, most corporations
involved in false advertising will
just laugh at a fifty dollar fine,
but if you show up with a TV camera
and give 'em bad publicity, they
shape up faster than goose shit
through a tin horn.

ED EARL

It's that bad publicity that I want
to talk to you about. Sometimes it
can hurt people. Like this report
I hear you're planning on the
Chicken Ranch. That place is older
than rocks and water. Hell, I wouldn't
be surprised if your granddaddy took
your daddy out there to learn about
the birds and the bees.

(X)

MELVIN

I'm from New Jersey.

ED EARL

Oh.

MELVIN

I moved to Houston six years ago.

CONTINUED

84

CONTINUED - 3

84

ED EARL

The point I want to make is every schoolboy in the state knows about it, most politicians have slept there, and the town, the Mayor and the folks who elected me want to keep things the way they are.

MELVIN

What is your interest in this whorehouse, Sheriff?

ED EARL

Well, my deputies patrol out there, stop fights before they start. The girls' police records are checked, so are their health cards. And as for getting information that helps us solve crimes, why the Chicken Ranch is a better intelligence-gathering operation than all those FBI flyers they keep mailing me.

MELVIN

You know, Sheriff, it just struck me. We're in the same profession.

ED EARL

What's that?

MELVIN

Law enforcement. I'm out there fighting for the rights of the public just like you. We're both of us protecting the people -- you in the old way; me in the new.

ED EARL

The new?

MELVIN

Television! I'm the electronic bounty hunter. I use a camera; you use a gun.

Ed Earl is not impressed with this comparison. He begins talking tough.

ED EARL

Melvin, all I want to say is you'd be doing everybody a big favor if

CONTINUED

ED EARL (Cont'd)
you'd drop this whole thing. The
girls perform a wanted service and
right or wrong....

MELVIN
Right or wrong don't interest me.
I'm no moralizer. I leave all that
to the preacher.

Ed Earl is a bit taken back by this admission and a little
confused.

ED EARL
Really? Well, I'm glad to hear
that. The Mayor was feeling that
you'd stir up a lot of unnecessary
publicity.

MELVIN
Unnecessary publicity! He's got me
all wrong. I'm not one of those
sensation mongers out for their
own egos.

He finishes dressing and stands looking at himself
of the mirror.

MELVIN
What do you think?

ED EARL
(pause)
It's...different.

MELVIN
I designed it myself. No, you tell
your Mayor he's got nothing to fear
from me on that score.

ED EARL
Really? Well, he'll be happy to
hear that.

MELVIN
I'm a lawman. That's my interest.
The law! Right, pardner.

He grabs Ed Earl's hand and shakes it. Ed Earl has still
not gotten a clear bead on this eccentric character, but
figures he's got what he came for.

CONTINUED

84 CONTINUED - 5

84

ED EARL

Right.

MELVIN

Come on, we've got to get out of
here. That's my cue.

85 INT. TV STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

85

They hurry down the hall to the studio's stage.

MELVIN

Listen, I'd like to do an interview
with you.

ED EARL

Well, I don't think I'm the type.

MELVIN

Nonsense. You are exactly what the
public wants to see. Trust me.
Look, we'll talk about it after the
show. I want you to be my guest.
This is the sponsor's booth. Just
sit in there and make yourself
comfortable. Bourbon, beer,
anything you want.

ED EARL

Thanks.

MELVIN

Not at all. I admire you,
Sheriff. You're my kind of
cowboy. See ya.

He leaves and Ed Earl, not too sure of himself and thinking
he needs a drink, goes into the booth and sits down. He
begins lighting a cheroot.

86 INT. TV STATION STAGE - NIGHT

86

The DOGETTES, Melvin's chorus of four male and four female
singers, have already begun their opening introduction.

DOGETTES

(singing)

Watchdog will get you
If you don't watch out
Watchdog sees and watchdog knows

CONTINUED

DOGETTES (Cont'd)

Watchdog keeps us on our toes
Watchdog assures you
That the law's the law
No exceptions to the rule
Watchdog ain't no fool.

A flustered stage manager is giving signals to Melvin and the cameras.

DOGETTES

Watchdog protects you
He's out on the prowl
Guards and checks the best he can
Watchdog is a fighting man
Watchdog will throw his
Beam of light around
If some folks don't tow the line
Watchdog's light will shine.

A DOGETTE

(speaking)

And now, The Watchdog Man himself.
The eyes and ears of Texas, Melvin
P. Thorpe!

Melvin steps out on the stage and stands before a map of Texas. The Dogettes cheer and the audience wildly applauds as an "Applause" sign flashes.

MELVIN

Thank you, fellow Texans, and
welcome to the Watchdog Report with
yours truly Melvin P. Thorpe
keeping an eye on what's going on
in this beautiful state of ours.

DOGETTES

(singing)

Shine, Shine, Shine
Shine, Shine, Shine
Shine, Shine, Shine.

MELVIN

This week's spotlight will shine on
the shameful situation that has
been allowed to exist for close to
a hundred years. I'm talking about
the Chicken Ranch, my friends. The
proprietor of this innocent-looking
ranch house is a woman known only

CONTINUED

MELVIN (Cont'd)
as 'Miss Mona' and the man who
turns his back on her illegal
operation is Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd.

Ed Earl, sitting behind the glass, stares in open-mouthed
horror at the mention of his name.

MELVIN
(continuing)
Did I say 'illegal?' Yes, I did!
Now, I know this is TV, so I'll try
to be as delicate as I can, but,
isn't this the age of tellin' it
like it is?

DOGETTES
Amen! Amen! Hallelujah!

MELVIN
Well, then let's get this thing out
in the open! Here goes, and may God
forgive me!

(pause)
Texas...has a whorehouse in it!

DOGETTES
(singing)
Lord have mercy on our souls!

MELVIN
(singing) •
Texas has a whorehouse in it!

DOGETTES
(singing)
Lord have mercy on our souls!

MELVIN
I'll expose the facts
Although it fills me with disgust.
Please excuse the filthy, dark details
And carnal lust.

DOGETTES
Filthy, dark details and carnal lust!

MELVIN
Dancin' goin' on inside it
Don't you see they've gone plumb wild
I inquired no one denied it
Now I think I'm getting riled

CONTINUED

86 CONTINUED - 3

86

MELVIN (Cont'd)
Bodies close together
Arms and legs all rearranged
And the Sheriff does not close it down
That's very strange!

Melvin points over to the sponsor's booth as the audience,
in unison, turns to look at Ed Earl.

AUDIENCE
(singing)
Does not close it down
That's very strange!

87 INT. TV STATION SPONSOR'S BOOTH - NIGHT

87

Ed Earl is taken aback at the sudden attention. He looks
out at the audience and then up at the monitors where the
show is being broadcast across Texas.

88 MONTAGE - NIGHT - TV MONITORS

88

We go to quick cuts of TV sets throughout the studio.

89 INT. HOMES AROUND HOUSTON - NIGHT - MONTAGE

89

Quick cuts of families watching TV. A series of heads
turning. A family at the dinner table staring at the TV
with their forks halfway to their mouths. A father puts
down his newspaper. A grandmother chokes. A grandfather
chuckles. A mother claps her hands over her daughter's ears.

MELVIN (v.o.)
Mean-eyed, juiced up, brilliantined
honky-tonk cowboys!

DOGETTES (v.o.)
Oh, no!

90 INT. OLD FOLKS' HOME - NIGHT - TV SETS

90

Old folks stop rocking. Hearing aids are turned up. Domino
games stop.

MELVIN (v.o.)
Mix-in' with green-eyed, thin-lipped
hard-as-nails, peroxide blondes!

91 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - TV SETS

91

A nurse drops a glass of medicine. A patient bites his spoon. An intern lets go a trolley.

DOGETTES (v.o.)

Oh, no!

92 INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT - TV SET

92

A holdup man and his victim stop in midrobbery to look at the TV set.

MELVIN (v.o.)

Not to mention some types that you'd
never guess would venture near....

93 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE MALL - NIGHT

93

Customers stare in surprise at a TV display while a salesman runs a credit card machine over his hand.

MELVIN (v.o.)

Actin' all depraved and loose and
wild.

94 INT. SENATOR'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT - TV SET

94

Senator Charles Wingwood has stopped pouring himself a highball and stares wide-eyed at the broadcast on the TV set in the backseat of his limousine.

MELVIN (v.o.)

Ninety miles from here.
(speaking)
Here they are, our own Melvin P.
Thorpe Singers!

95 INT. TV STATION STAGE - NIGHT

95

The men singers touch their fingertips to their hat brims; the girl singers half curtsy and smile broad, vacant smiles.

DOGETTES

(singing)
Texas has a whorehouse in it!

96 INT. DULCIE MAE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - TV SET 96

We see Dulcie Mae watching the show in her kitchen as she prepares dinner. Her twelve-year-old son, BILLY, is sitting at the table also watching.

MELVIN (v.o.)
(singing)
I'll not let this scandal fade!

97 INT. GILBERT GAZETTE OFFICE - NIGHT - TV SET 97

Edsel, the editor, is seated at his desk and can't believe what he's seeing.

DOGETTES (v.o.)
Texas has a whorehouse in it!

EDSEL
I'll be damned!

98 INT. MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - TV SET 98

The Mayor watches from his living room chair. He ch-

MAYOR
Doreen. Doreen! Run git my heart pills! Hurry!

99 INT. STUDY - NIGHT - TV SET 99

A little guy, in his underwear, watches from a big chair.

MELVIN (v.o.)
I'll uproot and I'll crusade!
I can smell corruption
And I'll fight it to the top!
Loveless copulation goin' oooonnnnn.
And it must stop!

100 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - NIGHT - TV SET 100

The girls are watching it in the parlor. All are startled and happy to be on TV.

GINGER
Oh, my goodness. They're talking about us!

101 INT. TV STATION STAGE - NIGHT 101

DOGETTES
Loveless copulation, stop that copulation!
Loveless copulation, stop that copulation!

102 INT. A HOUSTON BAR - NIGHT 102

An ex-boxer BARTENDER is staring with his few customers at the show on the small TV.

BARTENDER
Loveless copulation?

He picks up the phone.

103 TELEPHONE MONTAGE 103

All over the state, people are grabbing for their phones... farmers, cowboys, oil riggers, maids, cooks, school teachers.

Switchboards are a mass of activity as people in little vignettes sing to their neighbors.

DOGETTES (v.o.)
Texas has a whorehouse in it
Lord have mercy on our souls
Texas has a whorehouse in it
Lord have mercy on our souls
Watchdog smells corruption and
He'll fight it to the top
Loveless copulation goin' on
Goin' on, goin' on, goin' on....

We pull back from the little vignettes to see them form a map of Texas which dissolves into the smiling face of Melvin.

104 INT. TV STUDIO STAGE - NIGHT 104

MELVIN
Don't touch that dial neighbors.
I'll be back with new and revealing
information on this and other cases.
Watchdog never sleeps!

CONTINUED

104 CONTINUED

104

The Dogettes end the song while the audience joins in singing and swaying and the "applause" signs are now flashing "Amen" and "Hallelujah."

DOGETTES AND AUDIENCE

(singing in
counterpoint)

And it must stop
Watchdog's gonna get you
He's gonna shine his light on you
Watchdog's gonna get you
Gonna shine his light on you.

On the last beat, we pan over to the glass booth and push in on Ed Earl's empty chair.

105 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DINING ROOM - DAY

105

Mona is pouring Ed Earl a cup of coffee as he tells her the problems caused by Melvin's TV show last night.

ED EARL

That man is crazier than a peach
orchard sow. Announcing it
straight out, right there on
TV!

MONA

So you've been saying.

ED EARL

It's got everybody talking. Not
because it's news to anyone over
the age of three months, but
because they are hearing it in
their own damn living rooms.
Sung...sung to music!

MONA

Did he actually call my name?

ED EARL

Not only that. The son-of-a-bitch
called mine. Television! You
know, we ain't caught a Peeping Tom
in Lanville County in twenty-two
years because all the Peeping Toms
are home watching television!

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED

105

MONA

Well, Ed Earl, seems like ever since I can remember, folks have been ready to jump on me for one reason or another.

(hugs him)

We can beat it. We'll just sit tight 'til it all blows over. Besides I trust you. You're my protector.

ED EARL

You know that man wears a sock in his underwear?

MONA

A sock?

ED EARL

Yup. All rolled up like a Jimmy Dean sausage.

Mona laughs.

MONA

Well, I bet he's running for office and that's typical of those crusading fanatics. They flare up every few months, they're always confusing crime with sin. People just get sick of hearing it and pretty soon it just clears out of the air.

(X)

ED EARL

You're probably right.

MONA

Ain't I always? You know what I was thinking, Ed Earl? Just how much I miss all the little stuff you and me used to do. Like going up to the lake. Wouldn't it be fun to go up, get a couple of six packs and just get drunker than Cootie Brown?

(X)

ED EARL

That's the best idea you've had all year. When are we going to do that?

(X)

CONTINUED

#02139

58-A

Rev. 9/28/81
Already Shot

105 CONTINUED - 2

MONA

105
(X)

I'd like to do it tonight.

ED EARL

(X)

So would I.

He stands up and is about to take her in his arms when we
hear the sound of a honking horn outside. They stop.

MONA

I wonder who that is?

106 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

106

Deputy Fred pulls up in his car, stops and comes running up the steps. The girls on the swing begin to tease him.

GINGER

Well, howdy Deputy Fred. How's your tallywhacker hanging?

BEATRICE

Oh, quit embarrassing him. Anytime you want to lock me up honey, it's okay by me.

Deputy Fred blushes and goes inside.

107 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - DAY

107

Ed Earl comes out of the dining room and meets Deputy Fred in the hall. He glares at him.

DEPUTY FRED

Howdy, Sheriff.

ED EARL

This better be important.

DEPUTY FRED

Well, I think it is. That Melvin P. Thorpe is setting up his television show on the courthouse steps.

ED EARL

What?

DEPUTY FRED

He's getting pictures for his report on the late news tonight. He's got a whole posse of TV cameramen and reporters. You better come look.

ED EARL

Well, I'll be a...Right in the middle of town!

DEPUTY FRED

Un-huh. Right outside your office.

108 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

108

Ed Earl comes racing outside, followed by Deputy Fred. Mona follows them both.

CONTINUED

108 CONTINUED

108

ED EARL

I can't believe that sucker.

DEPUTY FRED

You know, he's even brought his own
singers.

Ed Earl gets in his car. Mona rushes over to him.

MONA

Now, Ed Earl. Don't do anything
you'll be sorry for. You watch
that temper of yours.

ED EARL

Don't worry about that, Mona. Just
leave that little shithead to me.

Ed Earl drives off. The girls on the porch cheer him on.

TADDY JO

Go get 'im, Sheriff.

BEATRICE

Come on, Deputy Fred.

Deputy Fred follows. The girls laugh, but Mona watches him
with a worried look on her face.

109 EXT. GILBERT TOWN SQUARE - DAY

109

Melvin's Watchdog Chorus is singing a reprise of "Texas Has
A Whorehouse In It" in the courthouse gazebo. The crowd,
including Dulcie Mae, looks on with amusement.The three old Nesters are playing dominoes. One looks up
across the fountain.

FIRST NESTER

Look at that fella in them trick
britches.

SECOND NESTER

It's too late in the year for the
circus, ain't it?

THIRD NESTER

It's them TV folks, looks like to
me.They grunt, go back to playing dominoes and never look up
again.

110 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

110

Melvin has a last minute touch-up on his makeup, slaps away his assistant, signals to the cameraman and begins his report.

MELVIN

Howdy again, good neighbors! This is the ol' Watchdog, himself, Melvin P. Thorpe, shining the spotlight on Gilbert -- the little town with the big shame. We're here at the Lanville County Courthouse to ask the local people how they feel about the infamous bordello running wide open in their American hometown.

(X)

He walks up to the gazebo where the Dogettes are assembled and addresses the crowd.

MELVIN

Good people! Good people of Gilbert! May I have your attention! I would like to speak to you about a matter of great importance and concern.

EDSEL

Let's hear it, Melvin. Lay it on us.

MANSEL

Yeah, we can't hardly wait.

MELVIN

I'm talking about nothing less than your community's moral health. I'm talking to you about official blindness, official corruption, official malfeasance.

LOUISE MAPLES

What's that mean?

MODENE ENNIS

I don't know. I'm just waiting for Ed Earl to get here. He's gonna kick that boy's ass.

111 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

111

Ed Earl is driving like a crazy man down the road, causing Deputy Fred behind him to be smothered in a cloud of dust.

112 EXT. GILBERT COURTHOUSE - DAY

112

The Dogettes are playing "Texas Has A Whorehouse In It" under Melvin's speech.

MELVIN

It's no big secret! You know
what's going on in this town. And
what's going on is evil, immoral,
brazen, and against the law. Hit it!
(singing)

(X)

Oh...Texas Has A Whorehouse In It.

DOGETTES

Lord have mercy on our souls!

MELVIN

Texas has a whorehouse in it!

DOGETTES

Lord have mercy on our souls!

MELVIN

Sin is runnin' rampant
Like before the fall
of Rome.

DOGETTES

Ooooh, ooooh,
Aaah, aaaaah.

MELVIN

Someone is permittin'
You know what.
And it must stop!

DOGETTES

Loveless copulation
Stop that copulation!

(X)

(X)

Ed Earl careens into the town square and screeches to a halt. He gets out. The Mayor, sensing danger, comes over to calm him.

MAYOR

Now, Sheriff, keep a grip on
yourself. Don't get your back up.

(X)

ED EARL

Quit whimpering, Rufus.

He walks over to the gazebo. Melvin stops the singing.

MELVIN

And here comes the man himself.
Would you care to give me an
interview now, Sheriff?

ED EARL

I'm giving you thirty seconds, you
fancified fart, to get you and your
singing chorus the hell out of town.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED

112

MAYOR

Now, wait a minute, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Pack up them damn cameras and get this stuff off my street. You're blocking traffic.

MELVIN

The only traffic we're blocking is that headed out for the Chicken Ranch, right, Sheriff?

A hushed crowd. Ed Earl cannot believe what he has heard. He pushes his hat brim up with a thumb and deliberately stalks up the steps. Standing six inches from Melvin, he looks him up and down, his gaze lingering on the outlandish, three-color cowboy boots on Melvin's feet.

ED EARL

Little fat buddy, you got two tickets up to now. Parading without a license and insulting me. Now, you either get this halloween carnival out of here, or I'm gonna lock up your ass 'til your corset pops.

(X)

MELVIN

We're perfectly within the law, Sheriff. As a newsman, I've got First Amendment protection. The public has a right to know what's going on out there, and what kind of payoff you're accepting to protect that notorious house of ill repute.

There is a low moan from the crowd. The locals know that the Sheriff has a low threshold for insults. Ed Earl begins slowly.

ED EARL

First thing. First thing is, you're standing in Lanville County. Which, by my figurin', is about a hundred miles west of that stinkhole you call Houston. So I can't see it's any of your business what goes on out here.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED - 2

112

Melvin signals the cameraman to get a better angle on the Sheriff. The soundman follows with a directional mike, pointing it directly at Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Number two, number two is you ain't an officer of the law and I am. So don't go telling me what my goddamn job is or, I'll whip your butt 'til it looks like stripes on a barber pole.

The local people, according to their respective dispositions and allegiances, cheer or react in a shocked manner. Billy and his friends are delighted.

BILLY

Git 'im, Sheriff.

MODENE ENNIS

(chortling)

He may be mean, but he's ours!

ED EARL

Three! No sawed-off little pecker is gunna accuse me of takin' a bribe and live to tell it, 'cause I wear the badge in this goddamn county. So you listen good, you over-padded, televisin' turd, if I ever see you or any one of your other bastards in this town again, I'll knock you so flat you'll have to roll down your socks to shit.

EDSEL

That's tellin' him, Sheriff.

DULCIE MAE

(laughing)

Oh, my goodness!

Ed Earl gets out his gun and points it at Melvin.

ED EARL

Now, get out of here, you goddamn wig-wearin' citified son-of-a-bitch!

He fires his pistol into the air. Women scream, dogs bark and everyone starts to scatter. The cameraman trips over the camera and Melvin, in his hurry to flee, falls backward into

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED - 3

112

the fountain and almost loses his wig. Ed Earl keeps shooting. The townspeople run for cover, but look on happily as Melvin and the TV crew hop in their two trucks and drive away. Ed Earl puts his gun back in the holster and mutters proudly to himself.

ED EARL

So long, pardner.

He looks around -- the crowd comes out from hiding and gives him a wild ovation. Billy is thrilled and points Ed Earl out to his friends.

BILLY

He's my friend. He's coming over
to my house to watch the Aggie game.

Ed Earl is accepting the adulation of the crowd. He gets into his car. Dulcie Mae comes over.

DULCIE MAE

You were wonderful, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Thanks, Dulcie.

DULCIE MAE

We've finished serving lunch, but I
did save you a piece of meatloaf. It's
your favorite.

ED EARL

Well, no thank you. I have an
official report to make about all
this and I've got to go up to the
Chicken Ranch and talk to Miss Mona.

DULCIE MAE

Oh, of course.

ED EARL

Catch you later.

Ed Earl drives off to the cheers of the citizens. We push in on Dulcie Mae's face. She knows he's going out to celebrate with Mona and that he is in love with her.

113
and
114

OMITTED

113
and
114
(X)
115

115 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Ed Earl drives by in his truck with Mona snuggled up beside him.

116 INT. ED EARL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

116

Mona looks up at Ed Earl and smiles contentedly.

117 EXT. THE LAKE - NIGHT

117

We pull back from the campfire that Ed Earl has built by the shore to reveal he and Mona lying up against a log and looking up at the heavens. They are quietly enjoying the peace of the moment. Mona sighs.

MONA

Look at them stars. Ain't nothin'
prettier than a Texas sky.

ED EARL

Ain't that the truth.

MONA

Hey! Did you see that shooting star?

ED EARL

Mmmmm.

MONA

Do you think that might have been a
spaceship? Do you believe in that
sort of thing?

ED EARL

Oh, sure. There's all kinds of
strange things happening. I seen
some pictures once of those little
guys from outer space. They're about
two feet high, have bald heads, tiny
little legs and they got no peckers.

MONA

Well, then, I ain't interested and
neither would any of my girls. You
know, when I was little I used to
dream about flying saucers coming
down to get me and take me off to
heaven. You know, like the angels.
'And I looked and behold a whirlwind
came out of the north...and out of
the midst of the fire came the
likeness of four living creatures.'

ED EARL

Oh, yeah. What are you talking about?

MONA

That's from Ezekiel. Haven't you
ever heard of Ezekiel in the Bible?

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED

117

ED EARL

Sure, I've heard of the Bible. But the only Ezekiel I ever heard of is Ezekiel Peebles in the eighth grade. I busted his jaw once.

MONA

That was very Christian of you, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Well, we were all Baptists in my family.

MONA

I never stayed with any one family long enough to become anything in particular. But I read the Bible and I do know about Jesus.

ED EARL

I think Jesus was a nice person. Must have been a good speaker.

MONA

You know, I knew a woman once who told me she had a vision of Jesus. He came right down and sat on the end of her bed one night. I believed her. I feel that could happen to me.

ED EARL

Well, if Jesus comes into your place honey, all hell's gonna break loose.

MONA

(laughing)

I guess you got a point, Ed Earl. But you know, Jesus was very good to Mary Magdalene and she was a fallen woman. Isn't that amazing. She was perhaps his best friend.

ED EARL

You mean Mary Magdalene was Jesus' girlfriend?

MONA

Well, not the way you're thinking. But Jesus did like to have a good time. People seem to forget that. You know, he went to a wedding once

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 2

117

MONA (Cont'd)

and they ran out of wine. So you know what he did? He turned some water into wine.

ED EARL

Sounds like a man who knowed how to party.

MONA

Now, don't be sacrilegious, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Oh, he knows I was kidding. He forgives me.

MONA

Yeah...I know he does. Ain't it funny. God can forgive you, but people can't. Why is that?

ED EARL

Because most people ain't too God-like, honey.

MONA

I know. I know.

A pause as they look at the sky. Ed Earl begins to chuckle.

ED EARL

That Melvin P. Thorpe is a sorry son-of-a-bitch.

MONA

(laughing)

Well, you sure sent him packing. I'm proud of you.

ED EARL

You think he's really running for office?

MONA

Why?

ED EARL

Well, I haven't told this to anyone yet, but I'm thinking of running for the legislature myself.

MONA

You serious, Ed Earl?

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 3

117

ED EARL

Yeah, I'm serious. A lot of people don't think an honest man can be elected, but I don't believe that. This is a great country and I'm gonna prove it.

MONA

Well, you've got my vote. I might even go register.

ED EARL

And you know why I'd win? Because I'd tell the truth. Nobody does that anymore and, by God, I'm going to give it a shot.

MONA

I didn't know you had dreams that big, Ed Earl. But people do like you.

ED EARL

Well, people like you, too. You'd be surprised if you took a poll around town.

MONA

Really?

ED EARL

Yeah, I hear it all the time. You're a well-liked lady.

MONA

Well, I always believed if you see somebody without a smile, give them yours.

ED EARL

I like that. Do you think I could borrow that slogan when I run for the legislature...'I always believed if you see somebody without a smile, give them yours.' ...I could put that on my card.

MONA

I used to have a dream once. Don't laugh. I wanted to be a dancer. One of the first things I can remember was a little ballerina on top of a music box. I would just watch her for hours dancing round and round.

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 4

117

ED EARL

Well, I don't think it's too late
for you to be a ballerina.

MONA

Oh, hell, Ed Earl. I'm so top-heavy,
I have a hard enough time balancing
these now without getting up on my
toes.

He chuckles and gives her a little kiss. Mona pauses.

MONA

Ed Earl, you know I don't see
anyone except you. Not anymore.
You can't say the same, can you.

ED EARL

I don't go to bed with anyone else.

MONA

You don't?

ED EARL

Not for three years now. You
didn't know that, did you?

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 5

117

MONA

No, I didn't.

ED EARL

Well, I figure there's nothing
better after you've had the best.

MONA

I like that. If I ever run for the
legislature, I'm gonna put that on
my card.They laugh. They kiss. They kiss again and fall into a
passionate and loving embrace.

118 INT. MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

118

The Mayor is watching television.

ANNOUNCER

Next up, Melvin P. Thorpe continues
his expose on the Chicken Ranch
with a violent demonstration in the
Gilbert town square.

The Mayor reacts to seeing the announcement on television.

MAYOR

Great God from Goldsborough! Doreen.
Doreen! Run git my heart pills!

119 INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

119

In the darkened room the phone is ringing. It rings three
or four times. A hand comes out from under the blankets,
turns on the overhead light and answers the phone. It is Ed
Earl. He sticks his head out from under the blankets.

ED EARL

Yes. Yes?

120 INT. MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

120

The Mayor is on the telephone.

MAYOR

Ed Earl, you better turn on Channel 4.
That Melvin P. Thorpe idiot has got
you on TV again.

121 INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

121

Ed Earl turns to Mona.

ED EARL

Honey, turn on the television.
Channel 4. The Mayor says that
Melvin P. Thorpe is spewing off at
the mouth again.

Mona reaches for the remote control for the TV on the night
table.

ED EARL

Calm down, Rufus, it can't be as
bad as all that.

Mona turns on the television and we see Melvin seated at the
news desk giving his version of what happened in the Gilbert
town square.

MELVIN

What happened to me, as an
individual, is not important.
But is this the kind of man
we want running our law enforcement?
Is this the kind of foul-mouthed
example we want to set for our
children?

(X)

On the television screen we see an edited version of Ed
Earl's speech:

ED EARL

No sawed-off little bleep is gunna
accuse me of takin' a bribe and
live to tell it...

(fires gun)

...'cause I wear the badge in this
bleep county. So you listen good,
you bleep-bleep, bleep-bleep...

(fires gun,
same shot)

...if I ever see you or any one of
you other bleep in this town again,
I'll knock you so flat you'll have
to bleep-bleep, bleep-bleep,
bleep-bleep!

(fires gun,
same shot)

Ed Earl and Mona watch in open-mouthed horror.

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED

121

MELVIN (v.o.)

Is this the kind of man we want
running our law enforcement? Is
this the kind of foul-mouthed
example we want to set for our
children?

Mona sadly shakes her head.

MONA

Ed Earl, that man has made a fool
of you.

Ed Earl, in shock, absently hangs up the phone.

122 INT. SHERIFF'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

122

The Mayor, Edsel and C.J. Vernon are pacing around Ed Earl's
outer office. The two phones are ringing and Rita has her
hands full. Deputy Fred waits. The Mayor takes out his
watch.

MAYOR

I've had calls from four preachers,
six deacons and the presidents of
two garden clubs.

RITA

(hanging up)

The phones have been ringing just
like that all morning.

MAYOR

Don't know why I let people talk me
into serving as the Mayor of this
incorporated sand trap anyway.

(looking at
his watch)

What the heck is keeping him?

RITA

He'll be along.

DEPUTY FRED

My wife couldn't believe what she
saw last night. They bleeped him
out, but she read his lips on every
'hell', 'goddamn' and 'shit'.

EDEL

Did you hear some folks are getting
up a petition to close the Chicken
Ranch?

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED

122

C.J.

All we wanted to do was keep it quiet. Now, thanks to Ed Earl, it's getting to be the hottest thing on the air since The Gong Show.

Ed Earl enters and stops at Rita's desk for his messages.

RITA

Mornin', Sheriff. Here's your calls.

ED EARL

Mornin', Rita. Mornin', fellers. I guess you're waiting to talk to me.

MAYOR

We sure are. You don't know the trouble you've stirred up with this Chicken Ranch business.

They follow Ed Earl into his office.

123 INT. SHERIFF'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

123

C.J.

Dammit, Ed Earl, if you aren't a pluperfect fool.

ED EARL

Maybe so. I've got calls here from a dozen shocked citizens telling me we've got a whorehouse operating in this county...for about a hundred and fifty years!

MAYOR

Ed Earl, you can set up speed traps to catch the tourists, you can look the other way when the wrong kid swipes a car to go joyriding, hell, you can even allow Miss Mona to run her place out there. But the one thing you can't get away with is broadcastin' gutter talk on TV!

ED EARL

How was I supposed to know they were taking pictures?

CONTINUED

123

CONTINUED

123

C.J.

What did you figure the cameras
were for?

ED EARL

You know, I'm getting just a little
sick of all this bad mouthin'. Hell,
the Chicken Ranch don't give me
half as much trouble as those
all night stag parties out at the
Legionnaires Hall.

C.J.

(embarrassed)
That ain't fair, ding it!

MAYOR

There's only one thing to do and
that's close the place down before
we all go to hell in a handbasket.

ED EARL

Close it down! Oh, you were all
willing to go along with Miss Mona
when things were running good
because she brought business to the
town and made civic contributions.
But now that she's in trouble,
you're all about to turn tail and
run like rats from a burning barn.

EDSEL

That's just it, Ed Earl. But who's
going to put out the fire?

MAYOR

Look, if you won't close her down,
at least tell her to lay low for a
couple of months.

C.J.

Just until the heat wears off.

MAYOR

Give it two months. What's two
months?

ED EARL

Dammit, Rufus. I don't want
anybody telling me how to do my
job. I'm still the law here and
I'll make up my own mind about
what's gotta be done!

124 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - DAY

124

Ed Earl is talking to Mona.

ED EARL

Two months. What's two months?

MONA

Shut down for two months! That's a hell of a lot of overhead to pay out when a company's cash is not coming in. What am I supposed to tell my girls?

ED EARL

Maybe it won't be two months. The holidays are coming up. Maybe in a couple of weeks it will have all blown over and you can start letting your regular customers in the back door.

MONA

You know, I warned you before you left yesterday about losing your temper...shouting and carrying on.

ED EARL

Last night you said you were proud of me.

MONA

Last night I wasn't on the eleven o'clock news!

ED EARL

I didn't know they were going to make me out to look like an idiot. I don't understand this electronic bullshit. How was I supposed to handle it?

MONA

That's your job. That's what you're paid for.

ED EARL

I know what my job is. I know I can have this whole place shut down in a New York minute. But all I'm asking for is a little cooperation from you so we can get through this difficult situation with as little trouble as possible.

CONTINUED

124 CONTINUED

124

MONA

Okay. Okay. I'll shut down.

ED EARL

You promise?

MONA

What do you want, a written contract? I give you my word.

ED EARL

I'm really sorry this had to happen.

MONA

Don't feel sorry for me. I started out poor and worked my way up to outcast.

ED EARL

Mona, I hate this, dammit, I really do. I don't want this to hurt our relationship, but I really believe this is the best answer. If you'll just trust me.

Mona is quite moved with his honest expression of emotion. She turns, smiles, and gives him a kiss.

MONA

Oh, you big cowboy, I do trust you. Ain't I always?

She gives him a hug. He kisses her lightly on the cheek and, with a flourish, puts on his hat. He turns and opens the door.

125 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - STAIRCASE - DAY

125

Ed Earl is coming down the stairs just as Jewel, carrying a pile of sheets, is coming up.

JEWEL

Well, if it ain't the celebrated cussing Sheriff of Lanville County. How are you Sheriff?

ED EARL

Fine. How are you, Forky?

JEWEL

(laughing)

Now, Sheriff, I been real good all week. I've lost six pounds.

(X)

CONTINUED

125 CONTINUED

125

ED EARL

Don't lose anything off those cheeks.

(X)

Ed Earl continues down the stairs and out the door. Jewel, laughing, walks up to Mona.

MONA

I've just promised the Sheriff to shut the place down for two months.

JEWEL

What? How can you promise that?
What about the football game celebration tomorrow night?

MONA

Oh, I forgot.

JEWEL

It's the Thanksgiving game, Miss Mona.
That's real special.

MONA

Yes, I know. Well, okay. But
we'll be closed for all regulars.
Do you think that'll be all right?

JEWEL

I'm sure it will, honey. That
party's a tradition.

126 EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY - HIGH SHOT FROM HELICOPTER

126

The traditional Thanksgiving Day rivalry between the Texas Aggies and the Texas Longhorns is in full swing.

127 INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

127

The ANNOUNCER, looking down over the field, is talking into the microphone.

ANNOUNCER

Well folks, this game has turned into a real stem-winder. The Texas Aggies, favored to lock up the Southwest Conference and waltz into the Cotton Bowl in Dallas for a happy New Year, are fighting for their football lives.

128 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

128

On the field, we see regular football action as the Announcer's voice continues.

ANNOUNCER (v.o.)

The Longhorns are playing tough defensive ball, making this traditional Thanksgiving Day classic one for the record books.

129 INT. DULCIE MAE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

129

Ed Earl and Billy are watching the game on the television in the living room. Thanksgiving decorations are on the mantle. In the kitchen, Dulcie Mae takes the turkey out of the oven. She looks over at her son sitting happily with Ed Earl on the couch.

BILLY

Come on, Aggies, plow those Longhorns!

Ed Earl laughs and pops a beer.

130 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MAIN ROOM - DAY

130

Some of the girls are putting up the decorations while the TV with the football game plays in the parlor. Out in the hall, Angel is on the phone.

ANGEL

Well, I sure do hope Mummy will be home for Christmas, punkin'. Now you have a good Thanksgiving and put Grandma back on...Mummy loves you, baby....

Jewel walks by with double sets of colored crepe paper ribbons and holds them up for the girls in the main room.

JEWEL

We'll string up the white first and then see who wins before we add the orange or maroon.

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED

130

GINGER

I cain't stand it if them Aggies win.

DAWN

What do you mean?

GINGER

They're such animals. Always yelling and jumping about and saying 'Yeee-haaw!'

ELOISE

I like that.

RUBY RAE

We had two Aggies here last year. They went upstairs to shoot craps -- and blew a hole in the toilet.

The girls all laugh, but Shy is a little backward.

SHY

Really? What did Miss Mona say?

JEWEL

She's putting you on, darlin'.

RUBY RAE

The hell I am. Those boys are dumb.

GINGER

Dumb ain't the word. You hear about the time the Aggie coach went up to the quarterback and asked him, 'Do you think you can pass this ball?' 'Hell, yes,' said the Aggie quarterback.

GINGER AND RUBY RAE

(laughing
together)

If I can swallow it.

The girls all join in laughing and now Shy sees that they are making Aggie jokes. She smiles. Ginger looks over at the television set.

GINGER

Come on, Longhorns! Hold that line!

131 INT. THE BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

131

ANNOUNCER

What a finish we've got here, folks. The Aggies are out of the huddle, twenty short ticks of the clock from oblivion. The underdog Longhorns lead twelve to seven, with the Aggies in business on the thirty-five yard line.

132 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

132

We see the play as it is described.

ANNOUNCER (v.o.)

Bubba Shrake takes the snap and drops back to pass. He's got good protection...he's looking deep. Shrake throws over the middle.

(shouts)

Sliney's got it at the five! He's hit and he's short of the goalline. He's stopped short! And he calls time! Time out on the field with three seconds left.

133 INT. TV STATION - DAY

133

Two ENGINEERS are watching the game on monitors.

FIRST ENGINEER

I'll bet those boys are creaming in their pants. You know that whichever team wins gets a celebration dinner tonight at the Chicken Ranch.

SECOND ENGINEER

Yeah. Course, it don't matter what the scoreboard says, the real winner of today's game is gonna be Miss Mona.

They laugh. We pan off the Enginerrrs and see that Melvin has overheard their conversation. He looks up at the monitor and smiles with gleeful expectation.

134 INT. THE BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

134

ANNOUNCER

Just three seconds left on the scoreboard clock. The Aggies trailing twelve to seven on the five-yard line, needing a touchdown to win.

135 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

135

We see the action described by the Announcer.

ANNOUNCER (v.o.)

The Aggies come out of the huddle
up to the line. Charlie Wilson
split right out wide. Sliney in
the slot.

(growing
excitement)

Shrake takes the snap, throws to
Cartwright, who swings wide to the
right. He's trapped behind the
line. He's gonna throw! Deep in
the endzone and...Sliney's got
it! The Aggies win it. The Aggies
win it thirteen to twelve!

Bedlam reigns. The crowd is pouring onto the field. The
Aggie band is playing and marching in celebration. The
players run to the locker room.

136 INT. DULCIE MAE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

136

Billy is jumping up and down on the sofa with delight. Ed
Ed Earl laughs and claps his hands.

137 INT. THE CHICKEN RANCH - MAIN ROOM - DAY

137

Ginger enters and looks at the girls. The celebration is
playing on the television.

GINGER

Who won?

Beatrice holds up the Texas A & M pennants they are
beginning to hang on the walls.

BEATRICE

The Aggies.

GINGER

Oh, shit.

Ruby Rae looks over at Ginger and, as if on cue, the other
girls join in....

GIRLS

Yeeehaaw!

138 INT. FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM - DAY

138

The Aggies come down into the locker room, all breathless and excited.

AGGIES

Yeeeeehaaaaw!

Senator Wingwood and the alumni welcome them.

SENATOR

Boys! Boys! That was the greatest victory since General Eisenhower won! You make me glad to be an Aggie. I swear, I could break down and cry like a baby, I'm so flushed with pride....

One of the Aggies is tossing bottles of Lone Star Beer to his teammates as they enter. He tosses one to the Senator.

AGGIE #1

Have a Lone Star on us, Senator.

SENATOR

Now, you boys know senators don't drink! It ain't good for the Baptist vote.

He pops it open and it sprays across the room. One of the Aggies does a few bars of a foot-stompin' cleat dance. The others cheer for him. A lot of "yee-haw's."

AGGIE #2

Hey, Senator, you ain't forgot you was gonna take us to the Chicken Ranch, have you?

SENATOR

(leering)

I always keep my campaign promises!

Cheers from the team.

SENATOR

Yes sir, the Chicken Ranch is a fine institution and I'm proud to have it in my district. And to hell with what Melvin P. Thorpe says. So let's get a move on and we'll see you boys at Miss Mona's.

He and his party exit.

CONTINUED

138 CONTINUED

138

The Aggies all cheer and the true celebration starts. They are pulling off their pads and uniforms. Various angles of the different players like LEROY SLINNEY, the young wide receiver, and BARNEY SCRUGGS, the ox-like defensive lineman. They begin to sing.

AGGIES

(singing)

We're gonna whomp
And stomp
And whoop it up tonight
Those little gals won't never ever
Be the same.

They're gonna love it when we whomp
And stomp
And whoop it up all right
It's even better than an Aggie
Football game.

BARNEY

(dumbly)

Better than a football game?

139 INT. SHOWERS - DAY

139

Various angles of the Aggies showering.

AGGIES

And then we're gonna show them all
A thing or two
We're gonna demonstrate
Just what
A champion can do
Yee-Haw!

We're gonna play 'em out and
Lay 'em out tonight
They won't have never seen nobody
Quite like me -- huh.

140 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

140

The Aggies come out of the showers and, snapping their towels and horsing around, go to their lockers to begin getting dressed.

AGGIES

We're gonna wham and bam and
Thank you ma'am tonight
I swear I don't know how they'll
Stand such ecstasy -- huh
Right between the goalpost.

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED

140

They put on their blue jeans and cowboy boots and sing.

AGGIES

We been deprived so long
But now we're gettin' some
I bet the girls are countin' up
The minutes 'til we come.

An Aggie pops up from behind a locker.

AGGIE #3

They ain't the only ones.

Peach-fuzzed, clear-voiced Leroy Sliney pushes a laundry cart down the middle of the locker room.

LEROY

Seventy-five miles until we get to
heaven.

AGGIES

Seventy-five miles until our
Plans are laid
Seventy-five miles until we get to
The Chicken Ranch
Where history
And Aggie boys
Get made.

The boys spin the cart around and begin the big dance number.

After a spectacular series of acrobatics and clogging, the Aggies, now fully dressed with shirts and hats, charge out of the front door.

141 EXT. A ROAD - DAY

141

From a helicopter we see the Aggie bus driving down a country road. We push in just as Leroy sticks his head out a window.

LEROY

Twenty-two miles until we get
To heaven.

Other Aggies stick their heads out.

AGGIES

Twenty-two miles until our
Plans are laid
Twenty-two miles until we get
To the Chicken Ranch.

142 EXT. AGGIE BUS - DAY

142

The whole team, with their hats in their hands, joyfully sticks their heads out the windows.

AGGIES

Where history
And Aggie boys
Get made.

The rear tire blows out and the truck careens to a halt by the side of the road.

143 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - UPSTAIRS ROOM - DUSK

143

Jewel is distributing some of the ball gowns to the girls. Shy picks one up and is admiring it, but Ginger is very bored with the idea.

GINGER

Do we have to wear these ball gowns again?

JEWEL

Yes, you do, and I don't want to hear any bitchin' about it. Miss Mona tries to create something special for these boys -- it's like a graduation dance.

144 EXT. ROAD - DUSK

144

Silhouetted against the setting sun, the Aggies are packed, stacked and hanging all over a small pickup truck driven by a somewhat confused old farmer. Leroy is holding onto the roof with one hand and sings excitedly.

LEROY

One more mile until we get
To heaven.

AGGIES

One more mile until our
Plans are laid.

145 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DUSK

145

The pickup truck drives up the hill to the front gate.

CONTINUED

145 CONTINUED

145

AGGIES

One more mile until we get
To the Chicken Ranch
Where history
And Aggie boys
Get made.

Leaping and jumping off the pickup truck, the Aggies dance up to the front porch and knock on the Chicken Ranch door.

146 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DUSK

146

Jewel opens the door and welcomes them. They enter politely, hats in hand. Senator Wingwood has already arrived and he greets them when suddenly all heads turn to Miss Mona as she makes one of her grand entrances down the stairs.

SENATOR

(to Mona)

Howdy, ma'am. I'm Senator Wingwood
of the 19th District and Aggie
Class of '49. Mighty proud to
meetcha.

MONA

Meet me? Come on, Charlie. How's
Mary Margaret and the kids?

The Aggies all laugh and the Senator is momentarily embarrassed.

SENATOR

Hell, Miss Mona. I didn't think
you'd remember.

MONA

You remember to bring the check?

SENATOR

I got it right here.

He produces it from his coat pocket and hands it to her.

MONA

It's a business doing pleasure with
you, Senator.

She rings the bell.

MONA

Come on, boys. We've got a surprise
for you.

She leads everyone out to the back.

147 INT. CHICKEN RANCH COURTYARD - NIGHT

147

Miss Mona enters with the Aggies as the girls are coming down the backstairs or waiting beneath the colored lanterns strung out over the punch bowl. They are all wearing their ball gowns and look slightly reminiscent of a high school prom. The Aggies break into whistles and catcalls and begin pairing off for an encore of the Aggie dance. Leroy spots Shy and he pairs up with her. Mona signals Ginger to take the Senator off her hands.

The high point of the number comes when the girls snap off their ball gowns (held in place by Velcro) and appear in their latest Frederick's of Hollywood underwear.

AGGIES

Yeeehaaaaaw!

The stomping becomes frenetic and the dance ends with the couples facing off inside or upstairs looking for a bedroom. The Senator goes with Ginger. Leroy goes off with Shy. Mona looks over at Jewel, gives her a look that says "Well, that's that," and turns off the party lights.

148 EXT. DULCIE MAE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

48

Ed Earl is leaving after having Thanksgiving dinner at Dulcie Mae.

DULCIE MAE

Thank you for spending time with Billy. He really idolizes you.

ED EARL

Yeah, I know. He's a great kid. And you're a great cook.

DULCIE MAE

Yeah, I know.

They laugh.

DULCIE MAE

I hope everything works out with this Melvin P. Thorpe business. I know it's been worrying you.

ED EARL

It'll all blow over soon.

DULCIE MAE

Of course it will. After all, the Chicken Ranch has been there for years. And Miss Mona...well, she does a lot of good in town.

CONTINUED

148 CONTINUED 148

ED EARL

Yes. She does.
(pause)
Well, it's late.
(kisses her
on the cheek)
Thank you, Dulcie. You're real
sweet and you're real special to me.

DULCIE MAE

Thank you, Ed Earl.

ED EARL

Good night, honey.

He hops in his car and drives home.

149 EXT. GILBERT TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT 149

Deputy Fred is making his rounds, walking across the
deserted town square. A TV van goes by. He stops and
looks. A car follows. He looks again. Melvin P. Thorpe in
the Watchdog van drives by. The Deputy scratches his head
and thinks about that for a moment.

150 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 150

Mona is in her bedroom going over her accounts. She opens
her ledgers and sits at her desk.

151 INT. A ROOM IN THE CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT 151

Leroy is contentedly smoking a cigarette. We pan over at
Shy looking at him demurely from the pillow.

152 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - TV PARLOR - NIGHT 152

Jewel has her feet up watching an old movie on television.
The house is very quiet.

153 INT. ED EARL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 153

Ed Earl, in his boxer shorts, is brushing his teeth getting
ready for bed. There is a knock at the front door. He goes
to answer it.

154 INT. ED EARL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 154

Ed Earl crosses the living room, turning on the lights as he
goes. He opens the door. It's Deputy Fred.

CONTINUED

154 CONTINUED

154

DEPUTY FRED

Good evening, Sheriff.

ED EARL

This better be important.

DEPUTY FRED

Well, I think it is. I was making my rounds in town when I just saw that Melvin P. Thorpe drive through with some other fellers on their way to the Chicken Ranch.

ED EARL

Well, he's going to be real disappointed. There's nothing going on up there. Miss Mona's shut down for two months on my orders.

DEPUTY FRED

No, she ain't, Sheriff. Hell...

(laughs)

I saw those Aggie boys up there tonight celebrating to beat the band.

ED EARL

Huh? Huh...Holy shit!

155 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT

155

Everyone has gone to bed. The lights are low. We pan down from Mona at her desk in her bedroom to shadows creeping along the Chicken Ranch wall. It is Melvin and his crew of cameramen and reporters (eight in all). They reach the lattice door to the backyard and, with a pair of chain cutters, cut the lock. Melvin turns to the camera, signals to switch it on and addresses his audience.

MELVIN

Now we're going to take you into the whorehouse itself.

156 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - BACK COURTYARD - NIGHT

156

Melvin and his crew creep along the back porch and sneak inside.

157 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT

157

They pass the parlor where Jewel has fallen asleep in front of a television station that has gone off the air. Melvin

CONTINUED

157 CONTINUED 157

positions his men near the light switches, then stands by the bell and gives the signal.

MELVIN

Okay, everybody up!

The bell clangs, all the lights in the house turn on and with a charging yell, Melvin and his crew go running up the stairs and through the whorehouse. Jewel wakes up and falls off her chair.

158 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 158

Mona looks up and reacts to the noise.

159 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - VARIOUS ROOMS - NIGHT 159

The still photographers throw open the doors and burst in, snapping pictures with flash cameras of couples in bed. Girls scream, boys jump out of bed and start putting on their clothes, knocking over tables and water bowls as they do so.

160 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - ANOTHER ROOM - NIGHT 160

Melvin bursts into a room, followed by his cameraman. He turns to address his television audience while the startled customer in bed looks around.

MELVIN

Now we're going to talk to some of the girls and their customers.

161 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - STAIRS - NIGHT 161

The place is in pandemonium. Boys and girls are running everywhere, screaming and shouting "raid." Mona comes out of her room and sees Jewel coming up the stairs.

MONA

What's going on?

JEWEL

It's that Melvin P. Thorpe sucker and his TV reporters.

Mona runs back into her room while Jewel grabs a still photographer who is running by her and starts belting him in the mouth. One of his friends comes to his assistance and Jewel karate chops him over the bannister.

162 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 162
Mona dials the Sheriff's office to bring assistance.

163 INT. CHICKEN RANCH UPSTAIRS - NIGHT 163
A montage of shots. An Aggie gets out from under a bed asking, "What's up?" Another Aggie leaves his girl, saying "Wait until next year" and rushes off. We see a foursome in bed surprised by a photographer, while in another room a boy and girl are so stoned out on a joint that they look around and mutter "Far out!"

164 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 164
Mona is getting no response from her phone call. She hangs up in disgust.

165 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - ANOTHER ROOM - NIGHT 165
Melvin bursts in on the Senator, who, with a highball in his hand, is being doused in baby powder by Ginger. Melvin sticks a microphone in front of the startled Senator's face. (X)

MELVIN

Senator, the eyes of Texas are upon you.

The Senator looks stupidly about in the haloed light of the powder-filled air. He sees the television camera and jumps out of bed and runs into a closet, slamming the door behind him. Melvin laughs.

MELVIN

I think we've got enough. Let's get out of here.

He and his crew run off down the stairs.

166 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 166
Mona takes down a shotgun from her wall and goes out to the landing. (X)

167 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - NIGHT 167
Football players are running out of the house and jumping into the Aggie bus. With his siren wailing, Ed Earl and Deputy Fred are driving up to the Chicken Ranch. Melvin and

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED

167

his crew are hopping into their vans and the car. Ed Earl drives up in a cloud of dust and parks. He gets out and looks at the scrambling Aggies. Mona appears at the front door with her shotgun. Just then, Melvin drives from behind the bus and speeds off towards the front gate. He passes by Ed Earl and laughs as he snaps a picture. We push in on Ed Earl. He shakes his head with anger. (X)

ED EARL

Holy, shit.

168 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

168

Ed Earl and Mona are in the midst of a furious argument.

ED EARL

You promised me, dammit! You gave me your word and I took it. I'm the law. I could have....

MONA

The law! A gang of crazies break into my house, invading my privacy, taking pictures. Just tell me what the law is going to do about that! I'll tell you. Nothing.

ED EARL

They wouldn't have any reason to be here if you'd done what you said you'd do. I trusted you. That's what hurts. I trusted you!

MONA

Don't talk to me about trust. I trusted you to protect me. So I made a mistake tonight, okay!

ED EARL

If that's your idea of apologizing....

MONA

I ain't apologizing. I'm a businesswoman paying out double taxes and I expect a little security for my money. Where were you? Where were your deputies?

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED

168

ED EARL

I was at home because I thought....

MONA

When Sheriff Jack Roy Wallace was running things, this could never have happened. But you, you just can't handle the job!

ED EARL

Goddamit, Mona, you're getting me mad!

MONA

That's right, cuss and shout just like on TV. You're still a kid playing at being a cowboy. You're never going to grow up. You use me as your mistress, you use that damn Dulcie Mae in town as your on-call wife, you even use her son so you can play weekend daddy. But that's all it is, Ed Earl, playing. And that's all you are, a kid playing at being a man.

Ed Earl grabs his hat and turns in the doorway.

ED EARL

I don't have to listen to this crap. Just remember, I'm wearing the badge and the only reason your doors stay open is because of me.

MONA

Don't threaten me. I'm telling the truth and you know it. Your big dreams of going to the legislature, that's all they are...dreams. 'Cause you'll always be what you are right now -- a chicken-shit sheriff in a chicken-shit town.

ED EARL

Maybe so, but that's a damn sight better than being a whore!

As soon as he said it, Ed Earl wishes he hadn't. Mona turns to him. Tears are welling up in her eyes.

Ed Earl slams his fist against the dressing table and breaks the glass. He turns around and storms out. Mona watches and listens as he goes down the stairs and out the front door. She falls down on the bed and sobs uncontrollably.

169 EXT. TEXAS LANDSCAPE - SUNRISE

169

After a series of overlapping shots of the sun coming up over Texas, we pick up a group of far away stallions at the top of a field, galloping across the horizon. They lead us into a tight closeup of Ed Earl, leaning against a fence post, watching them. He is unshaven and remorseful, having stayed up all night. Backlit by the early morning light, he begins to sing.

ED EARL

Sometimes I get crazy
As fools are known to do
Lose my head in spite of
Everything I stand to lose
What is it in a man
That makes him act like
Such a fool
I swear I never knew
But always needed to.

Stubborn pride is just
The way of stallions I suppose
Even love can't change
The things I want to change the most
And it's pride that's got me standin'
When I should be on my knees
Making apologies
But it's so damn hard for me.

Ed Earl leaves the fence and begins walking across the dusty field to his own barn and stables.

ED EARL

Oh, but now and again
I wish I'd a been a poet
So I could know the perfect lines
To say
Have some great romantic way
To show it
Be the hero ridin' up
To save the day.

And I'd go ridin' high
Like a knight in shining armor
Just sweep her up and race into the sun
But I don't have no magic ways
To charm her
No, it's lonely in the fields
Where stallions run.

169-A INT. STABLES - SUNRISE

169-A

Ed Earl comes into the stables and walks over to his horse in the stalls.

CONTINUED

169-A CONTINUED

169-A

ED EARL

And I'd like to say I love you
But those words just don't come
Words like that are no match
For the kind that rule my tongue
But I can only hope she knows
I love her anyway
No matter what I say
Oh, but I never say.

He releases the horse into the side corral and then walks
across it to the gate.

ED EARL

Oh, now and again
I wish I'd been a poet
So I could know the perfect lines
To say
And have some great romantic way
To show it
Be the hero that rides up
To save the day.

169-B EXT. CORRAL - SUNRISE

169-B

He stands by the gate and pauses before he opens it.

ED EARL

But I'll never be a knight
In shining armor
And as for poets
I was never one
I'm just a fool that must
Restore his honor
Oh, the winds are cold
That blow where stallions run.

He swings open the gate.

ED EARL

I'm just a fool that must
Restore his honor
Or only walk in fields
Where stallions run.

Ed give a loud cry and the horse gallops past him through
the gate and charges across the open fields towards the
rising sun.

170 INT. NATIONAL TV NEWS - EVENING

170

WALTER CRONKITE, at the anchor desk, is reporting the Chicken Ranch story to all America.

WALTER

Legalized prostitution -- pro or
con -- is in the news again today.
We now take you to Jeff Gerald in
Gilbert, Texas.

We pan off the "No Entry" sign across the front road leading to the Chicken Ranch up to JEFF GERALD with a microphone, talking into the camera. Some deputies and a few sightseers are parked in the background.

GERALD

The Chicken Ranch, the legendary
long-running bawdy house is showing
little activity after the
disclosure yesterday of the
Thanksgiving night raid. A deputy
at the front gate keeps away
onlookers and potential customers,

CONTINUED

170 CONTINUED

170

GERALD (Cont'd)
while up at the house, the shutters
are closed and the principals not
talking.

We cut to newsreel film shot earlier where we catch a
glimpse of Mona behind the window curtains and Jewel shooing
off reporters from the front porch. We also see a cut of Ed
Earl walking from his car to his office, refusing to talk to
the press.

GERALD (v.o.)
The Sheriff of Gilbert, Ed Earl
Dodd, refused interviews; while in
Houston the man who launched the
campaign, consumer advocate Melvin
P. Thorpe, held a press conference
this afternoon.

We cut to filmed footage shot in Melvins's studio.

MELVIN
I have a report here that says the
Chicken Ranch is involved with and
under the influence of organized
crime and I will be taking this
report to Austin in the hope that
the Governor will come out of his
long silence on this issue and
uphold the law.

After an establishing shot of the Austin Capitol, we cut to
a press conference in Senator Wingwood's office.

GERALD (v.o.)
At the Capitol today, the Governor
made no statement, but Senator
Charles Wingwood, who was a
principal figure in the Watchdog
News raid, also held a press
conference explaining his
involvement.

The Senator nervously reads his prepared statement.

SENATOR
I have no independent recollection
of going to the Chicken Ranch and I
can only say as the most dedicated
anti-communist in the state

CONTINUED

170 CONTINUED - 2

170

SENATOR (Cont'd)
legislature that I must have been
drugged by communists or communist
sympathizers and placed there to
harm my reputation and good name...
So I am now calling on every
freedom-loving American to call the
Governor and have this shameful
place shut down.

In the town square of Gilbert, Gerald has set up his cameras
and is about to interview some local citizens.

GERALD
Reaction across the state is split
fifty/fifty, but in the town of
Gilbert itself, the Chicken Ranch
has many supporters.

We cut to Edsel, the newspaper editor.

EDSEL
I've never seen anything bad come
from it and I've lived here all my
life. It brings in business for
the community and they pay taxes,
same as anyone else. Besides,
no one ever was forced to go up
there.

We cut to HENRY, a tough, redneck farmer.

HENRY
The Chicken Ranch? I think it's a
good idea. You take a lot of young
boys, they're going to be looking
for women. If they can't find 'em,
they'll rape 'em, and if they don't
do that, they'll run to other women
and get diseases. Those girls went
to doctors.

We cut to DORA, a sweet and proper old lady in town.

DORA
My Frank, when he was alive, used
to go up there every Saturday. I
took it as a blessing. Course it
was different then. Nowadays women
enjoy doing that sort of thing
themselves -- least that's what
I've been told.

CONTINUED

170 CONTINUED - 3

170

We cut to Gerald for the wrap-up. He is standing in front of the Gilbert courthouse.

GERALD

Although petitions are being —
circulated to 'Save the Chicken
Ranch' this bumper sticker is
already beginning to appear around
the state:

He holds up a sticker saying "Pluck the Chicken Ranch."

GERALD

And so, as feminists line up behind
the bill for the decriminalization
of prostitution already in the
legislature and as traditionalists
and fundamentalists lobby for its
defeat, the fate of the Chicken
Ranch rests with the Governor, who
today was again unavailable for
comment. Jeff Gerald, CBS News in
Gilbert, Texas.

171 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

171

The little man in the big chair watches the close of the
report. He picks up a glass of water and drops in an Alka-
Seltzer.

172 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

172

Mona has been watching the Cronkite report with Jewel. She
turns it off. They both know the serious trouble they're
in.

JEWEL

I hate admittin' I was wrong, Miss
Mona, but with television
broadcasting this from hell to
breakfast, we should have done what
the Sheriff said and kept this
place closed.

MONA

It was my decision, Jewel. It was
my fault.

CONTINUED

172 CONTINUED

172

JEWEL

He ain't gonna be able to stop it,
this time, is he?

MONA

I think he'd probably like to, but
he's out of his league. He doesn't
know how to fight them. He's just
a good old boy that will never grow
up.

JEWEL

Honey, you see everything in this
profession, but one thing I ain't
even seen, man or woman, is a
grownup. Don't be too hard on
him. He loves you.

MONA

He's never said it.

JEWEL

Some men can't say the words,
honey, but that don't mean they
don't feel it in their heart.

MONA

Maybe it's just as well. I set my
course a long time ago and I can't
be changing now.

173 INT. DULCIE MAE'S CAFE - NIGHT

173

The Mayor, Edsel, C.J. and Mansel are talking over the
problems of the week. Ed Earl is seated at the counter
drinking a beer with his back towards the others. Dulcie
Mae is listening and watching Ed Earl as the others discuss
the situation.

MAYOR

Well, I don't know what to do
anymore. It seems folks got
nothing to talk about but this
Chicken Ranch mess. It's like a
broken record: Chicken Ranch --
Chicken Ranch -- Chicken Ranch --
Chicken Ranch!

C.J.

This bad publicity's flat ruining
business.

MAYOR

I haven't sold a car all week.

CONTINUED

173 CONTINUED

173

MANSEL

It's ruining the town. No one's blaming you, Ed Earl. It ain't your fault. But we can't just sit around waiting to grow tits.

EDSEL

The way I see it, the Chicken Ranch served a purpose once, but everything's opened up today. Why, we've undergone a worldwide sexual revolution. Miss Mona's place is not obscene. It's just obsolete.

C.J.

She ain't got a handful of supporters left, Ed Earl. All this publicity is making folks think twice about signing that petition to keep her open.

MANSEL

Why the hell don't that station in Houston turn their cameras to the cesspool in their own backyard.

EDSEL

Or Austin. Within two blocks of the Capitol building you can get anything done to you for money that you can get in Tangiers! Tongue baths, naked massages, somebody ticklin' your ass with a feather.

C.J.

If you know that for a fact, Mr. Newspaper Editor, it's your duty to expose it.

EDSEL

C.J., I don't give a damn if folks occasionally want their asses tickled with feathers. I'd kinda like to think that's what heaven's all about.

Ed Earl finishes his beer and slams it down. He turns around and faces them.

ED EARL

Boys! I got myself a pretty good bullshit detector. And after

CONTINUED

173 CONTINUED - 2

173

ED EARL (Cont'd)
listening to you I can damn sure
tell when somebody's peeing on my
boots and telling me it's a
rainstorm.

He gets up and puts on his hat.

ED EARL
This thing has gotten way out of
hand. I don't know how. It just
sort of ate me up before I knew it
was hungry. But I do know there is
one thing I can still do.

MAYOR
Close it down.

ED EARL
Nope. I'm going up to Austin and
see the Governor. Someone's got to
give him Miss Mona's side of this
situation. He sure as hell ain't
going to hear it from anyone in
this room.

MAYOR
But you can't go up to see the
Governor.

C.J.
He doesn't see anybody.

ED EARL
He'll see me.

He opens the door and steps outside. Dulcie Mae follows.

174 EXT. DULCIE MAE'S CAFE - NIGHT

174

It is chilly. Ed Earl is buttoning up his jacket.

ED EARL
I feel like a country dog in the
city. If I stand still, they screw
me. If I run, they bite me in the
ass.

She smiles in spite of herself.

DULCIE MAE
I wish there was something I could
do.

CONTINUED

174 CONTINUED

174

ED EARL

Thanks...They all want me to close
her down. Have her leave town.
But how can I tell her to leave
when all I want her to do is stay.

He smiles at her sadly and walks across the street to his
car. She knows that's the first protestation of love he's
ever made. She has tears in her eyes.

175 INT. DULCIE MAE'S CAFE - NIGHT

175

The men are still discussing Ed Earl's plan.

MAYOR

Ed Earl's a damn fool. Driving up
to Austin to see the Governor.
Don't he know that's hopeless.

EDSEL

Oh, he knows it's hopeless.

C.J.

Then why is he going?

EDSEL

Because that's what being a Texan
is all about.

176 EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DAY

176

A group of reporters is standing outside the Governor's
house waiting for him to appear. An AIDE comes out and
addresses them like a herald.

AIDE

Ladies and gentlemen. His
Excellency, the Governor of
Texaaaassss!

The Aide and entourage clap wildly as the Governor steps out
the front door to accept the reception. It is the little
man that we have seen earlier. The Governor beams, waves
his cowboy hat and quiets the fanfare as if he were facing
twelve thousand instead of a dozen.

GOVERNOR

Mah frens, I want to thank you for
that sincere and heartwarming
ovation.

CONTINUED

176 CONTINUED

176

He walks with his phalanx of aides past the reporters who clamor and call for his attention.

FEMALE REPORTER #1
Governor, what do you think of the explosive situation in the Middle East?

GOVERNOR
I was saying just this morning, at the weekly prayer breakfast in this historic Capitol, that it behooves both the Jews and the A-rabs to settle their differences in a Christian manner.

The Governor's Aide and other flaks applaud as the Governor moves towards his limousine waiting at the bottom of the steps.

MALE REPORTER #1
Governor, Governor, sir. Have you seen the evidence of the disgraceful situation at the Chicken Ranch?

177 EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - CURBSIDE - DAY

177

The Governor stops at the bottom of the steps. He turns to face the reporters and clears his throat.

GOVERNOR
(singing)
Fellow Texans
I am proudly
Standing here to humbly say
I assure you
And I mean it
Now who says I don't speak
Out as plain as day?
And fellow Texans
I'm for progress
And the flag, long may it fly.

I'm a poor boy
Come to greatness
So it follows that I cannot tell
A lie!

He hops into his car and drives off.

CONTINUED

177 CONTINUED

177

MALE REPORTER #2

What the hell did he say?

FEMALE REPORTER #1

I don't know.

MALE REPORTER #1

Same as usual...all hat and no
cattle.

We pan with the Governor's limo as it takes the short ride
across the park to the Capitol.

178 INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

178

The Governor is very pleased with himself. He sits in the
backseat and his feet tap out a rhythm on the car floor.

GOVERNOR

(singing)

Oooo! I love to
Dance the little
Sidestep
Now they see me,
Now they don't
I've come and gone...
And ooooooo!
I love to sweep around
A widestep
Cut a little
Swath and lead
The people on.

179 EXT. STATE CAPITOL STEPS - DAY

179

As the limousine drives up and the Governor steps out,
another group of reporters is waiting for him. He gets out
of the limousine and walks up the steps.

FEMALE REPORTER #2

Governor, Governor, do you plan to
take action against the Chicken
Ranch?

The Governor stops and turns to face the crowd.

CONTINUED

179 CONTINUED

GOVERNOR

179

(singing)
Now my good friends
It behooves me
To be solemn and declare
I'm for goodness
And for profit
And for living clean
And saying daily prayer.
And now my good friends
You can sleep nights
I'll continue to stand tall
You can trust me
For I promise
I shall keep a watchful
Eye upon you all.

The reporters look bewildered as the Governor disappears into the Capitol.

FEMALE REPORTER #2

Did you get any of that?

MALE REPORTER #3

I hear him talkin', but he don't come in.

180 INT. STATE CAPITOL CORRIDOR - DAY

180

The Governor looks out through the glass doors at the confused reporters and chuckles to himself.

GOVERNOR

(singing)
Oooo! I love to
Dance the little
Sidestep
Now they see me,
Now they don't
I've come and gone...
And ooooooo!
I love to sweep around
A widestep
Cut a little
Swath and lead
The people on.

Tripping the light fantastic, the Governor shuffles inside.

181 INT. STATE CAPITOL ROTUNDA - DAY

181

The Governor dances into the rotunda where Melvin Thorpe, his camera crew, and a chorus of Dogettes with Texas flags are waiting for him.

MELVIN

Governor, Melvin P. Thorpe.
Watchdog News. Why has the Chicken
Ranch operation been so long
ignored?

GOVERNOR

Beg pardon?

MELVIN

Is it true organized crime may be
involved?

GOVERNOR

We seem to be having some acoustic
problems in here.

MELVIN

And aren't you worried about
possible payoffs and bribes?

GOVERNOR

Melvin, I'm sorry....

MELVIN

Enough of this pussyfooting,
Governor! Just what are you
prepared to do about Miss Mona and
the Chicken Ranch?

Melvin looks around. The Governor has disappeared. He
looks up. The Governor is standing by the railing of the
first floor landing.

182 INT. STATE CAPITOL - FIRST FLOOR LANDING - DAY

182

The Governor smiles at Melvin and begins to sing:

GOVERNOR

(singing)

Now Miss Mona
I don't know her
Though I've heard the name,
Oh yes.
But of course I've
No close contact

CONTINUED

182 CONTINUED

GOVERNOR (Cont'd)

182

(singing)

So what she is doing, I can only guess
But now Miss Mona
She's a blemish
On the face of that good town
I am taking certain steps here
(points to
his dancing
feet)

Someone, somewhere's gonna
Have to close her down!

183 INT. STATE CAPITOL - ROTUNDA - DAY

183

The reporters and even Melvin are confused.

FEMALE REPORTER #3

Is that 'yes' or a 'no?'

MALE REPORTER #3

It's the possible maybe.

184 INT. STATE CAPITOL - UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - DAY

84

The Governor pops like a leprechaun back and forth
the marble pillars as he dazzles us with his footwork.

GOVERNOR

(singing)

Oooo! I love to
Dance the little
Sidestep
Now they see me
Now they don't
I've come and gone
And oooooo!
I love to sweep around
A widestep
Cut a little
Swath and lead
The people on.

The Governor dances his final chorus, ending with a big
finish that ushers him into his office as the music ends.

185 INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

185

The Governor leans against the door and with a sigh of
satisfaction wipes the sweat from his brow. He goes to his
desk as MABEL, a plump and proper lady, bursts in from his
outer office.

CONTINUED

185 CONTINUED

185

MABEL

Governor, I have Sheriff Dodd from Gilbert waiting outside to see you. He's been here since early this morning and is very insistent.

GOVERNOR

Swearing Sheriff Dodd?..The one on television? I can't....

Ed Earl enters and interrupts.

ED EARL

Governor, you've just got to listen to me...I know my coming here is way out of line but before you go closing the Chicken Ranch I want you to know the facts.

GOVERNOR

Well, I haven't made that decision yet. My aides are working....

ED EARL

The Chicken Ranch, Governor, has been in my county since before I was born. Its doors have been open to soldiers and presidents and farmers and even governors who can remember what a great institution it is.

GOVERNOR

No need to bring that up, Sheriff.

ED EARL

I'm not threatening you, Governor. Whatever you say I'm going to do, but think of the people out there. I've known Miss Mona for twelve years and there's no finer woman that you'll ever meet. The town likes her. She never refuses a charity -- the hospital fund, a new swimming pool. Hell, she even bought uniforms for the Little League so they wouldn't have to play in their blue jeans.

(X)

CONTINUED

185 CONTINUED - 2

185

GOVERNOR

Well, I wasn't aware of her civic generosity, but the law is the law.

ED EARL

And sometimes it's got to be changed. Look, I've been fighting crime all my life, but let's not confuse crime with committing a sin. You can't legislate morality. Those girls are out there have never caused any trouble. They're healthy, tax-paying, law-abiding citizens who supply a demand and provide an economic asset to the community.

(X)

GOVERNOR

Ed Earl, you ever thought of running for office? You make that whorehouse sound like a damn non-profit recreational facility.

ED EARL

Governor, if the citizens who elected me had found it necessary to close it for any reason, I would do it. If Miss Mona and her girls were jeopardizing the health, wealth or moral scruples of the community, I would do it. If the place had even been just a piddlin' nuisance, an eyesore, or even a fire hazard, I would close it down. But there's nothing! No reason, except the cries of this muckraking sensationalist on television.

Half a dozen aides rush in.

AIDE

Here they are, Governor. What you've been waiting for.

The Governor takes the sheets of paper and scans them. He sighs and looks over to Ed Earl.

CONTINUED

185 CONTINUED - 3

185

GOVERNOR

I'm sorry, Ed Earl. The Chicken Ranch loses, forty-two to thirty-seven, with twenty-one per cent undecided.

ED EARL

(confused)

What is that?

GOVERNOR

The polls! You can't ask me to go against the polls! This is what the people want.

(to his aides)

Is Melvin still outside? Maybe I can catch the television cameras before they leave.

He runs to the door and flings it open.

ED EARL

But, Governor, that's not what my people want.

The Governor stops in the doorway and turns to Ed Earl.

GOVERNOR

(decidedly)

The show's over, Sheriff. Close it down!

He runs off and his aides follow.

Ed Earl is bitterly disappointed. He turns and exits.

186 INT. GOVERNOR'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

186

Mabel, the secretary, steps out with him. She has been impressed with his speech.

MABEL

I'm sorry, Sheriff. You're a good speaker. You could run for office here.

CONTINUED

186 CONTINUED

186

Ed Earl puts on his hat.

ED EARL

I was thinking about it, m'am, but
I'm just a country sheriff. I'll
never be grown up enough to be in
politics.

He tips his hat to her and walks outside.

187 INT. STATE CAPITOL ROTUNDA - DAY

187

The Governor has just congratulated Melvin on his victory.
A marching band strikes up the song, Melvin is hoisted on
his supporters' shoulders and is marched around the rotunda
as everybody sings. The flagwaving Dogettes fall in line
along with other citizens carrying signs (e.g., "Concerned
Citizens for a Whore-Free Society").

CHORUS

(singing)

Melvin Thorpe has done it
Once again
He's shown his light
And now we see
Melvin Thorpe has gone through
Thick and thin
And led us all to victory.

The Governor looks down from the first floor landing and,
pleased with his handling of the whole situation, he sings
his song in counterpoint with the Dogettes.

GOVERNOR

(singing)

Oooo! I love to
Dance the little
Sidestep
Now they see me
Now they don't
I've come and gone
And ooooooo!
I love to sweep around
A widestep
Cut a little
Swath and lead
The people on.

188 INT. STATE CAPITOL STAIRCASE - DAY

188

Ed Earl walks down the steps to the ground floor. He looks over at the rotunda where Melvin is getting ready for a live broadcast. The Dogettes and the band are singing their last celebration chorus.

DOGETTES

Melvin Thorpe has done it
Once again
He's shown his light
And now we see
Melvin Thorpe has gone through
Thick and thin
And led us all....

189 INT. STATE CAPITOL ROTUNDA - DAY

189

Melvin is standing in front of a live camera.

(X)

(X)

MELVIN

Get those cameras rolling. I'd just
like to hit that Sheriff one more time!

(X)

Suddenly he is tapped on the shoulder. He turns around.
It's Ed Earl. The Sheriff, with one hand, pulls off
Melvin's wig, grabs him by the collar and with a great
right punch, smacks him in the jaw. Melvin goes sailing
across the polished marble floor and lands in the middle of
the rotunda, spread-eagled over the Lone Star of Texas.

(X)

CHORUS

...to victory.

Ed Earl walks up to him, drops the wig on his face, steps
over the inert body, and exits out the front doors while an
astonished crowd stares in silence.

190 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DUSK

190

From the weather vane shaped like a rooster on top of the
Chicken Ranch roof we look down at the Sheriff's deputies
stationed at the front gate. A few gawkers and tourists
with cameras park by the roadside. Deputy Fred walks over
to send them away.

191 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - DUSK

191

The girls are standing around, bored...some drying their
hair, reading, practicing musical instruments or ballet.
Ruby Rae comes in and goes to the window.

RUBY RAE

What's going on out there?

DURLA

Nothing much.

CONTINUED

191 CONTINUED

191

BEATRICE

The Sheriff's deputies have been
shooing off the gawkers all day.

RUBY RAE

Well, I wish the Sheriff or the
Governor or somebody would make up
their mind whether this place is
going to be staying open or not. I
got to make plans.

BEATRICE

Me too. I got to think about my
future.

RUBY RAE

Honey, you're sitting on your
future.

DURLA

I suppose we could always go to
Vegas.

GINGER

Sugar, I've lost a step. Shreveport's
more my speed right now.

ANGEL

Well, at least I'll get to spend
this Christmas in Dallas with my
kid.

DURLA

Then what.

ANGEL

Then, by God, I'm staying home.
Join the straight life.

RUBY RAE

I heard that before.

ANGEL

No, this time I'm gonna make myself
like it. Besides, I've quit twice
before and they say third time's
the charm.

192 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

192

Mona is at her desk going over her books when Shy enters.

SHY

Any word, Miss Mona?

CONTINUED

192 CONTINUED

192

MONA

No...My, that's a pretty outfit.
You've blossomed into a real lady,
Shy.

SHY

Well, I want to be like you,
Miss Mona. This place is the only
home I've ever had and them girls
is the only family.

MONA

I know just how you feel.

The phone rings. Mona stops talking. Shy looks at the
phone and excuses herself.

SHY

I'll see you later.

She closes the door behind her. Mona picks up the phone.

193 INT. SHERIFF'S INNER OFFICE - NIGHT

193

Ed Earl is standing by the side of his desk. It is
obviously very difficult for him to be making this call.

Inter-cut the conversation.

ED EARL

Mona, this is an official call. As
the Sheriff of Lanville County,
it's my duty to....

MONA

(interrupts)

Get to the point, Sheriff.

ED EARL

I've got to close you down.

MONA

I see. How long do we have?

ED EARL

Well, it would be better to do it
as soon as possible.

MONA

I understand.

CONTINUED

193 CONTINUED

193

ED EARL

Look, Mona, about the other night.
I apologize. I was angry and I
lost my temper.

MONA

That's all right, Ed Earl. I think
we both said things we regret.

ED EARL

Is there anything I can do....

MONA

No, thanks. I think you've done
all you could. I'll tell my girls.

She hangs up.

Ed Earl puts down the phone. He looks around his office,
picks up his hat, turns out the lights and walks out the
door.

194. INT. CHICKEN RANCH MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

194

Mona comes down the stairs and walks into the main loc.
where the girls are assembled.

MONA

Well, the news has come. I just
got a call from the Sheriff. We're
closed down...immediately and
permanently.

RUBY RAE

Well, Las Vegas here I come.

GINGER

Would you believe I'm going to
miss this old place. I've gotten
in the habit of having a permanent
address.

ELOISE

Damn. I thought when the Sheriff
went up to Austin to speak to the
Governor we'd get a reprieve.

CONTINUED

194 CONTINUED

194

MONA

What did you say?

DAWN

Didn't you know about that, Miss Mona?

ELOISE

He drove up last night. The whole town's talking about the way he fought for you. Didn't he tell you that?

MONA

No, he didn't.

There are tears in her eyes. Music creeps in as we:

DISSOLVE TO

195 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

195

An air of sadness surrounds the little house.

196 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - UPSTAIRS - DAY

196

The girls are packing their suitcases in their various rooms and getting ready to leave.

BEATRICE

(singing)

Hey, maybe I'll dye my hair
Maybe I'll move somewhere.

ELOISE

Maybe I'll get a car
Maybe I'll drive so far
They'll all lose track.

GINGER

Me, I'll bounce right back.

CAMELLIA

Maybe I'll sleep real late.

DAWN

Maybe I'll lose some weight.

CONTINUED

196 CONTINUED

196

BEGONIA

Maybe I'll clear my junk.

197 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - STAIRS - DAY

197

Durla is walking down the stairs, followed by Mona and the other girls.

DURLA

Maybe I'll just get drunk
On apple wine.

MONA

Me, I'll be just
Fine and dandy
Lord, it's like a
Hard Candy Christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let sorrow
Bring me way down.

198 INT. CHICKEN RANCH PARLOR - DAY

98

MONA & GIRLS

I'll be
Fine and dandy
Lord, it's like a
Hard Candy Christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let sorrow
Bring me way down.

199 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - MONTAGE - DAY

199

During the bridge, we see a montage of some of the girls saying their farewells: one packs a last Christmas present; one puts a photo of her boyfriend in her suitcase; one looks out the window for the bus and checks her watch; one takes a last look around an empty room and turns off the fan.

200 INT. CHICKEN RANCH KITCHEN - DAY

200

Jewel is packing up some pots and pans.

JEWEL

Hey, maybe I'll learn to sew.

CONTINUED

200 CONTINUED

200

ROSELEE

Maybe I'll just lie low.

TADDY JO

Maybe I'll hit the bars.

LINDA LOU

Maybe I'll count the stars
Until the dawn.

201 INT. CHICKEN RANCH COURTYARD - DAY

201

Four girls are walking across the empty courtyard carrying
their suitcases to the main house.

RUBY RAE

Me, I will go on.

ANGEL

Maybe I'll settle down.

ZINNIA

Maybe I'll just leave town.

PETUNIA

Maybe I'll have some fun.

202 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH PORCH - DAY

202

The girls are seated in a tableau around Mona and Jewel
waiting for the bus.

SHY

Maybe I'll meet someone
And make him mine.

MONA

Me, I'll be just
Fine and dandy
Lord, it's like a
Hard candy Christmas
I'm barely gettin' through tomorrow
But still I won't let sorrow
Bring me way down

CONTINUED

202 CONTINUED

MONA AND GIRLS

202

I'll be
Fine and dandy
Lord, it's like a
Hard candy Christmas
I'm barely gettin' through tomorrow
But still I won't let sorrow
Bring me way down

One girl looks up and sees the bus coming up the road. She looks back at the others. They see it, too.

MONA AND GIRLS

I'll be
Fine and dandy
Lord, it's like a
Hard candy Christmas
I'm barely gettin' through tomorrow
But still I won't let sorrow
Bring me way down

203 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

203

The bus arrives in front of the Chicken Ranch.

A TRIO OF GIRLS

I'll be fine....

DISSOLVE TO

204 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

204

There are now less girls.

SHY AND GINGER

I'll be fine.

Shy kisses Mona and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO

205 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

205

Now only Jewel and Mona are left. Mona waves and says half to herself.

MONA

Hey, we're gonna all be fine.

206 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

206

A long shot of the bus pulling away from the Chicken Ranch with Mona and Jewel standing in the doorway.

It is a cold winter day. The girls have gone. Jewel is securing the ropes around the jukebox in the U-Haul trailer attached to Miss Mona's car.

Ed Earl drives up in his pickup truck. He's in his uniform but over it he has his sheepskin jacket with the collar up. Jewel is happy to see him.

JEWEL

Hey, Sheriff!

ED EARL

Mornin', Jewel.

JEWEL

I'm so pleased to see you. I knew you couldn't let me leave without a sweet good-bye for old Porky.

ED EARL

(smiles)

Good-bye, Jewel.

Ed Earl gives her a hug.

JEWEL

Good-bye, Sheriff. I sure hope you come up to the ranch to visit Miss Mona and me.

ED EARL

Where is she?

JEWEL

Inside.

Ed Earl goes off to the door. He looks at the trailer.

ED EARL

I see you're keeping the old juke.

JEWEL

(laughing)

Oh, Sheriff, I wouldn't leave without my bell and my box.

Jewel rings the bell and laughs as Ed Earl goes inside.

Most of the furniture has been removed or stuck off in a corner covered with sheets. Ed Earl walks inside and looks around. The fans on the ceiling have all stopped. He turns as Mona comes down the stairs. They look at each other. They have so much to say it's very difficult to find the words. Mona forces a smile.

MONA

The place looks kinda funny, don't it. Ben Sawtuck bought all the furniture and the fixtures. I left it up to Langston downtown to sell the rest.

ED EARL

Mona, I've got something I have to tell you.

MONA

Thank the boys for me, will you? Those reporters and sightseers could have gotten out of hand if it weren't for your deputies down there at the gate.

ED EARL

It's been on my mind ever since this thing....

MONA

Ed Earl, the thing to do is put all this behind you. Quick as you can. I've made some money, had a few laughs. Now it's time to pay the fiddler, that's all.

Mona walks to the window and looks out. Ed Earl comes and stands behind her.

ED EARL

Mona, you've known me now for a long time. You know me better than I know myself. You know how difficult it is for me to say this, but, Mona, I love you. I want to marry you.

Mona turns around into his arms.

MONA

Oh, Ed Earl, I've loved you since I was a sixteen-year-old baby and I'll keep on lovin' you 'til they bury me.

CONTINUED

They kiss...lovingly and passionately. Mona breaks away.

MONA

But, listen to me, Ed Earl. I've thought about this for me a long time now and as much as I would like for it to work, I know deep in my heart it could never be.

ED EARL

Mona, didn't you hear what I said?

She hushes him with her fingers on his lips.

MONA

I did, my darlin', but it's always going to be the way it is. You'll always be the Sheriff -- and you should be because you're good at your job -- and I'll always be... just what I am. You know it and I know it. It just wouldn't work.

ED EARL

But we can make it work. We've got to give it a chance. I don't give a damn what people say.

MONA

(singing)

'If I should stay
I would only be in your way
And so I'll go and yet I know
That I'll think of you each step of the way
And I will always love you
I will always love you.

Bittersweet memories

I guess that's all I'll be taking with me.

Good-bye, oh please don't cry

'Cause we both know that I'm not what you need

I will always love you

(talking)

And I hope life will treat you kind

And I hope that you have all that

You've ever dreamed of.

I wish you joy, I wish you happiness

But above all this, I wish you love.

ED EARL

I love you, and I will always love you.

CONTINUED

208 CONTINUED - 2

208

Ed Earl turns and exits. Mona begins to sing. She breaks down before the song is finished and collapses on the sheet-covered sofa.

MONA

(singing)

'And I will always love you
I will always love you,
I'll always love you...'

As the music plays, we push in on her sobbing. Suddenly, loud noises from out front make her look up. Another loud noise. Still with tears streaming down her cheeks, she gets up and walks to the window.

209 EXT. POINT OF VIEW

209

Mona looks out the window to see Ed Earl pitching her suitcases into the back of his pickup. He is very determined and Jewel is assisting him by pointing out which luggage belongs to Miss Mona.

210 INT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

210

Mona brushes away a tear and walks out to the front porch.

211 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

211

Ed Earl, walking forcefully down the path, approaches the porch. In a series of quick cuts, we see Mona's feet leave the porch, Ed Earl sweeping her up in his arms and him striding back down the path to his truck. Jewel cannot control her glee. The music segues into the chorus of STALLIONS RUN as Ed Earl deposits Mona in the front seat of his pickup and slams the door behind her. Jewel cheers.

Mona, surprised, smiles at Jewel through her tear-stained face. Ed Earl comes in and sits beside her. He starts the truck, looks at her for a beat, smiles, then steps on the gas. Turning the truck around in a cloud of dust, he speeds off down the road to the front gate.

212 EXT. CHICKEN RANCH - DAY

212

It is later. The front door is shut with a hand-lettered sign saying "Closed on account of the T.V." Jewel starts up

CONTINUED

212 CONTINUED

212

Miss Mona's car with the jukebox strapped in the U-haul and drives off down the road. She takes one last look over her shoulder and then continues on to the front gate. We also take one final look at The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas before we rise in the helicopter and watch it recede in the b.g.

NARRATOR

(X)

(singing)
'Oh, the little house lay
In a green Texas glade
Where the trees were as coolin'
As fresh lemonade
Soft summer wind
Had a trace of perfume
And a fan was turnin'
In every room.'

CHORUS

Twenty fans were turnin'
They were turnin'
Twenty fans were turnin'
In every room
Fevers were a-burnin'
They were burnin'
And they had to have
A way to cool down.

MONA'S VOICE

It was just a little old bitty
pissant country place....

213
and
214

OMITTED

213
and
214
(X)

FADE TO BLACK

END CREDITS

The music begins a foot-stompin' reprise of the songs as we flash short cuts of highlights from the film. At the end of the credits, Mona turns to camera.

MONA

Ya'll come back now, you hear?

THE END